



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Yahi Group



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

A Message to Our Readers

The eight-page Yahi Group newsletter you are holding in your hands right now is the last of its kind.

We're sure many of you realized this day would come. We've talked of this before, and the ExCom has reached its decision regarding our future.

Please be assured, however, that we are not going away. We are just changing the way we bring you news and information about Yahi Group and other issues of interest to Sierra Club members.

We will continue to publish three times per year but our format, after this edition, will change to four pages. The November issue will include an insert with the ExCom ballot inside. This leaves us just enough room for conservation notes, outings, and the sponsor ads which help to support this effort.

We have tried in the past to encourage our readers to let us know their email addresses so we could send them the

full newsletter on their computers (in beautiful color!) and this will continue. Our on-line editions will include more articles and information than we are able to include in our mailed editions. In the new, smaller format, you will be able to print the newsletter, or just selected pages, yourself. Besides – and this should really be a no-brainer – it's a more earth-friendly way to bring the printed word to people.

We are mindful that not all of you have computers, but there must be quite a few of you who do. This time we really do need your help: those of you who can, please send your email address to yahinews@comcast.net.

We have loved working with the newsletter for all these years (since 2002) and look forward to continuing – but in a somewhat changed way.

*Susan Sears
Louise Casey*

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Club News

It's All About *Liquid Gold!*

By Grace Maria Marvin, Conservation Chair

The Delta Stewardship Council is charged with "protecting the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the critical role it serves in the water supply for millions of Californians and its unique ecosystem and way of life." But on January 26, the Delta Stewardship Council must have felt *drowned* out by the huge numbers of citizens who showed up at Chico's Dorothy Johnson Center to discuss the Delta Plan. There were not enough seats, and while the press reported that there were some 70 people present, I saw many more.

Citizens, coming from several counties, spoke about wanting a major change in the direction of the meeting: project proponents had wanted us to hear a formal program and then break down in small groups to discuss it. But the audience insisted that everyone present needed to hear questions, responses, and comments while together. The audience consisted of farmers (including orchardists), fishermen, representatives from small and large environmental groups, a lawyer, at least one Hoopa citizen coming from the Trinity River region, and concerned citizens of every stripe. We had come from near and far -- concerned that a huge number of people who might have wanted to share their views probably could not afford the time or money to drive to Chico that weekday evening. Chico was the northernmost meeting place

for public comments about what many saw as really being a water transfer project.

Delta Plan proponents explained that they foresee increased water to the Delta and water districts as involving *free market* water transfers between "willing buyers and sellers;" it would not be a drought water bank. Moreover, they said that it would not be the case that the Federal government would buy water and send it south. But it seemed the audience recognized that increasing the amount of water for the Delta certainly was part of an overall plan to move water from the north state down south. As stated in the Water Transfer project literature: *Water transfers would occur through various methods, including, but not limited to, groundwater substitution and cropland idling, and would include individual and multiyear transfers from 2012 through 2022.*

In addressing some people's wariness about the true goal of the Delta Plan, proponents stated that water would not be going to the southernmost parts of the state. But the public didn't seem to be at all interested in promoting water transfers from the north, even to just the Westlands Water District or to Kettleman City. That would be disastrous to our north state farmers, recreation interests, the ecology that helps produce water, and the

(continued on p. 3)

Newsletter Information

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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 Susan Sears at 532-0149.

For advertising in the Newsletter, please call John Woods (530-899-8607). For changes in membership address (which also affects the address for receiving the newsletter by mail) please write to Sierra Club Member Services, Post Office Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80328-2968; sending a mailing label for the old address will speed the process.

Submission Guidelines:

Please include name, phone, and address with each submittal. Short, single topic articles are preferred. Deadlines for proposed articles and letters to the editor: February 1, June 1, October 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.

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Club News

Liquid Gold *(continued from p. 2)*

economic well-being of communities, counties, and ordinary citizens. We heard many compelling personal stories clearly demonstrating that the north state could not afford to lose any more ground water. Indeed, while the water agency spokespeople were very polished, their responses to public concerns often seemed quite *shallow*.

The spokespeople for the Delta Plan spoke proudly of their "Coequal goals" which were *providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. But I heard nothing about the goal of protecting the ecological systems in the north state that are a source of most of the Delta's water*

Audience members also expressed extreme skepticism about any assurances given to us, *e.g.*, an audience member stated that what agencies deem to be "safe yields" of water would not be safe for us. Furthermore, Westlands Water District has a history of selling farther south water it imports, meaning that they will take more than they need. We also heard many other comments from the public, including 1- The government broke promises to Native Americans about water flows in the Trinity River area. 2- The Delta Plan does not even have a proper project description nor enough good data for proper environmental impact reports. 3- There are many examples of shrinking amounts of water in north state wells and aquifers, sometimes accompanied by sinking ground (subsidence). 4- Many fear that we will become another San Joaquin Valley. 4- It is truly unfair that we have to raise money for legal costs in order to in challenge water transfers that have no good scientific or ecological justification as well as coming up with money for drilling new, deeper wells to replace those that have gone dry. 5- In some north state areas, insufficient good quality water exists for streams, riparian habitat, fish, and humans; moreover, we do not know enough about how much water we have or to what degree water can be "recharged," especially with the decline in snow pack 6- There are many south state farms that require excessive amounts of water because of ecologically poor choices of crops.

A light touch about this deep water problem: One man in the audience saw a sad parallel in what his son told him about why he sold illegal drugs. Answer: because there was a "willing seller and a willing buyer."

I heard similar concerns and viewpoints, firsthand, at the January 11 meeting regarding the North-South Transfer project, the January 13 evening meeting about Water Models at the Chico Masonic Center sponsored by the League of Women Voters, and at Citizens Water Watch daytime meetings on January 13 and 24 in Chico, and at the January 19 meeting in Willows of the Northern Sacramento Regional Water Management Group. A few of the lessons I learned included:

1-Eight (8) times more water exists in claims made by those with so-called Water Rights than is actually available. Individualistic claims to over-allocated Water Rights conflict with the notion that water is a truly a **Public Trust**, *i.e.*, water that should be managed carefully -- in terms of maximizing conservation and ensuring truly beneficial uses for the common good.

2- We in the north state need to come up with our own models of how groundwater should be managed, so that we can

present them to to state and federal water organizations, while looking for possible problems with the models we are given by others who want our water. But whether it is their data or ours, we must be certain scientific studies are undertaken that are directed by highly reputable groups. Too often science is conducted in a way that it is "conclusion-driven," *i.e.*, it is not highly reliable or valid. Water-aware environmentalists told me that the U.S. Geological Survey and the Water Education Foundation (www.watereducation.org) are very good sources of valid information.

3- The new Northern Sacramento Valley Regional Water Management (6 county) Plan is in the process of being developed, and we can get involved now: we need to make sure that our counties' representatives truly understand water concerns and that they do not allow the Department of Water Resources to drive the agenda. (The next meeting will be March 7 at 9 a.m. in Chico. Location to be announced, *e.g.*, at <http://buttecounty.net/WaterResourceConservation/NoSacramentoIRWM.aspx>.)

4- California's **Environmental Water Caucus** consists of numerous highly reputed non-governmental organizations, including Sierra Club-California. They have shown how water can be better managed than in any of these projects (water transfer, integrated management, or Delta). At their website, we can see why they have voiced unanimous opposition to plans for tunnels, pipelines, and other cement structures. Instead, they cogently argue why numerous, very specific conservation measures could provide all the water that is truly needed throughout the state. See <http://www.ewccalifornia.org/>

5- We need to convey our insights and data awareness to to the newly appointed Secretary of Natural Resources, John Laird, to other key decision makers, such as our representatives, and citizens on relevant committees and boards. We also need to educate and mobilize our fellow citizens to create a groundswell of intelligent water awareness accompanied by conviction that we should be heard. At a minimum, we can find out what plans are being made for our water, and submit written comments to the relevant agency by their deadlines for public comment. One governmental source is the Department of Water Resources: <http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/>. The aforementioned Environmental Water Caucus is one of many alternative sources of information. In the north state, among the organizations you could contact are Butte Environmental Council (challenging the county on its water assessment in the General Plan) and Aqualliance (challenging the north-south water transfers). Both are in Chico.

We need to make our voices all the stronger because the population north of Davis makes up only a tiny percentage of the population, even while we live where most of the water has its origin. The politicians pay far more attention to the big population centers.

p.s. Keep your eyes and ears open about two lawsuits:
1- The Sierra Club is one of the 3 parties that has challenged the Dyer Mountain Development Project in Lassen county; 2- Save Our Water Resources and Friends of Orland have a lawsuit against the city of Orland over the proposed Crystal Geyser bottled water plant. They will see their day in court on May 27 in Sacramento.

March, April, May, June 2011 Outings and Events

For updated outings information and for general information about outings and meeting places, please see our web site at <http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/>

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: \$3 per night. For those at the intermediate level with some volleyball experience. For more information, call Karen, 899-8305 or Betty, 345-7205.

March

Sunday, March 6 – Bidwell Ranch Tour (grade 1, class A) Come explore the vernal pools and early spring wildflowers on the City of Chico's Bidwell Ranch property. Tadpole shrimp, fairy shrimp and other surprising creatures should all be out to greet us. Two biologists/ecologists will lead the tour and help us identify and understand the ecology of the area. The tour will last about 3 hours. Wear sturdy and water proof shoes. (ground is often muddy, uneven and wet.) Bring your favorite flower guide. Meet at the east end of the parking lot of Wildwood Park at 1PM. It is at the entrance to Upper Park and near the roundabout. Call leader for more information. Leader: Dave, 566-1500.

Saturday, March 12 - South Rim Bidwell Park Trail (grade 2, class B) This is a car shuttle trip. We'll meet at the Five Mile recreation/ picnic area in Upper Park at 1PM and car pool up to the green gate. The hike is approximately 6 miles. Wear hiking boots, bring a snack and money for carpool drivers. There is a possibility of spring flowers, bring a flower field guide if you like. Rain will cancel the hike. Leader: Julian, 893-1994.

Saturday & Sunday, March 12-13 – Antelope Creek Backpack (grade 2, 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. We'll camp by the beautiful creek and return by the same route the next day. Individual commissary. Heavy rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 10:00 AM (for a 120-mile round-trip drive) or Hog Lake parking lot at 11AM (off Hwy 36 east of Red Bluff) or at Paynes Creek store about 11:30AM. Rain cancels. Call leader in advance to sign-up. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net

Saturday, March 19 - Sutter Buttes Hike (grade 2, class A). Guided by Daniel Barth of Yuba Historical Society, we will circumnavigate Cat Rock, 500' volcanic pinnacle that looms over Peace valley, view an Indian encampment, and walk to a waterfall and lush bay grove, hike up to 200' Cat Rock Cave, all the while learning about the geology, biology and history of the area. Light rains do not cancel. Limited to 25 participants. Wear layers, bring lunch and water. \$15/person plus

carpool. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 7:45 AM or in Live Oak. Sign up with leader: Jeanne, 899-9980. Co-leader: Annette, 872-3557. Asst. Leader: John, 872-8258.

Friday, March 25 - Dine with us at Priya (Indian Cuisine) at 6PM. Call leader: Jeanne, 899-9980 by Thursday, March 24 to reserve your seat. Asst. leader: Peggy, 343-9843.

Saturday, March 26 – Table Mountain Hike (grade 2, class A) Enjoy the spectacular wildflowers, views and waterfalls on this 6-8 mile hike. Bring plant guide, camera, lunch, water and sturdy footwear. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9 AM or Spring Valley School at 9:30AM. Return time around 4 PM. Leader: Julian, 893-1994; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

Saturday, March 26 - Independence Trail/ Empire Mine Hiking & Guided Tour. (grade 2, class A). A nine-mile, fairly flat, lovely spring hike with great views of stream and forest and waterfall over what use to be a flume near Nevada City. Then a tour of the interesting historic Empire Mine in Grass Valley and walk on the trails around this area. Wear layers and comfortable hiking shoes. Bring lunch, plenty of water, \$5 mine entrance fee, and carpool money. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8 AM. Call leader for more information: Jeanne, 899-9980. Asst. leader: Michelle, 865-9491.

April

Sunday, April 3 - Paradise Lake Hike (grade 1, class A). Enjoy the spring beauty of Paradise Lake on this 5-6 mile walk on a flat path around the lake. Bring lunch, water and comfortable shoes. Meet at 9 AM at Chico Park & Ride or at Paradise Lake trailhead around 9:45. Rain cancels. Parking fee: \$2/ car. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. leader: Annette, 872-3557.

Saturday, April 9 – Deer Creek Hike (grade 2, class B). Experience the full spring beauty of the Deer Creek trail in a 5-6 mile round-trip hike. Deer Creek in spring offers several small waterfalls as we pass through the newly green buds of Douglas fir, ponderosa pine and incense cedar. Bring lunch, water, carpool \$ and a camera. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Leader: Julian, 893-1994.

Sunday, April 10 – Dye Creek Preserve Hike (grade 2, class B). Enjoy a moderately strenuous 6-7 mile private 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. We will hike beyond the usual route for a great view of the surrounding area and to visit a historic site. Bring boots, lunch and water. Cost: \$2 per person, plus carpool \$. Approximately an 80-mile round-trip drive. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8 AM. Limited to 20 participants. Bring, lunch, plenty of water and carpool money. Wear layers. Light rain does not cancel. Sign up with leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Co-leader: Alan, 891-8789.

Saturday, April 16 – Feather Falls Hike (grade 2, class B) Come enjoy the 6th highest waterfall in the U.S. and the



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March, April, May, June 2011 Outings and Events

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 \$\$\$. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or at the NW corner of the Oroville Wal-Mart parking lot at 8:35AM. Leader: Julian: 893-1994; Asst. Leader: Dave, 566-1500.

Sunday, April 17 - "Leafing Out of Spring Celebration" at the Maidu Museum and Historic Site, Roseville. Let's carpool together to this free event and watch cultural demonstrations and Indian dancing; listen to native poetry and storytelling; take a guided tour of the historic site and a nature plant walk. Food, beverages will be on sale or bring your lunch, water (picnic tables available.) Meet at Chico Park N Ride at 8AM to carpool. Bring carpool money and wear layers. Light rain does not cancel. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

Saturday, April 23 - Chico Park Divison's Earth Day Project (grade 1, class A). 10AM to 1PM. Meet at Cedar Grove Picnic Area in lower Bidwell Park (off of E. 8th Street). We'll work on restoration and clean up around the Nature Center, Deer Pens and Cedar Grove areas. Wear sturdy closed-toe shoes and bring gloves if you have them. Tools and water will be provided. Call Lise Smith, Bidwell Park Volunteer Coordinator, 896-7831; Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

May

Saturday, May 7 - Bidwell Park Day Hike (grade, class A) Take a mostly shady, flat 10 mile trek along the south side of Big Chico Creek. Meet at One Mile's Caper Acres at 10AM. Our walk is on paved park road past Five Mile to the upper park (via a gravel/pedestrian bike path) and ends at the golf course. Bring water and lunch (or buy at golf course). Rain cancels. Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

Saturday, May 7 - Endangered Species Faire (volunteers needed). Join the Yahi Group in Cedar Grove in lower Bidwell Park anytime from 10AM to 3PM.

Saturday, May 14 - Centerville Flume Hike (grade 2, class A) Walk along the rushing water of the flat, gold rush era Centerville Flume in Butte Creek Canyon. The trail starts in live and black oaks and ends in pines and firs as we gradually climb for a round-trip distance of 8-10 miles up and down the canyon. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM for a round trip drive of 25 miles. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Sunday, May 22 - Upper Bidwell Park Hike to Indian Caves and Demonstrations. (grade 1, class A). We will join 20-year Maidu people expert Chuck Kritzon who will talk about the Maidu people who once inhabited Bidwell Park; demonstrate flint knapping and arrowhead, a spear thrower and make a friction fire. We will visit two Maidu shelters complete with bedrock grinding holes, the first up the Maidu trail, the second near the Middle trail (can be muddy, rocky and uneven ground), walk down to Chico Creek where we will find more

grinding mortars and have our lunch. Approx. 4 mile loop. Limited to 20 participants. \$10/adult. \$5/child. Wear layers. Light rain does not cancel. Meet at the Horseshoe Lake parking lot after the Chico Rod and Gun Club. Call leader to sign up: Jeanne, 899-9980. Asst. leader: John, 872-8258.

June

Friday, June 3 - Let's dine together at Cocodine (Thai cuisine) at 6 PM. Call leader to reserve your spot by Thursday June 2. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980. Asst. Leader: Kellie, 892-1744.

Sunday, June 5 - Mill Creek Trail hike (grade 1, class A). This is one of the best hikes in the Whiskeytown Area, 5-mile RT mostly shady hike following the lovely Mill Creek, with 19 creek crossings(!) through the Tower House Historic District and past the El Dorado Mine. Meet at Chico Park N Ride at 8 AM. We'll pick up Red Bluff folks at 8:30ish and Redding folks at 9:30ish. Call for details. Wear layers. Bring lunch, plenty of water and carpool money. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leaders: John, 872-8258 and Bill, 527-8203.

Thursday, June 16 - Sierra Club Newsletter Folding. Join us to help fold and sort the newsletter for mailing; it only takes about an hour, and we always have a lot of fun! Volunteers are always needed: newcomers and old members are both welcome. Call 343-9277 for directions and more info.

Saturday, June 18 - Sacramento River Loop Bike Ride (grade 2, class A). A flat, leisurely 15 mile round trip past orchards along Sacramento Avenue to the Sacramento River and return to Chico on River Road. Bring lunch and water. Helmet required. Meet at Subway Restaurant, corner of W. Sacramento Ave. and Nord Avenue at 10AM. Leader: Gene, 873-1552; Asst. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.



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Contributions, gifts and dues to 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 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

Conservation Forum

Gateway Mountain Center Improving Ecological Literacy, Health, and Empowerment in Today's Youth

By Peter Mayfield, The Gateway Mountain Center

Field Science

We all know that getting youth into the natural world is worthy; but with our current education climate it's also important to deliver curriculum giving students solid field science experience. With our incredible location at Donner Summit, we combine beauty, inspiration, fun and adventure, with hands-on science activities.

Our wetland studies are one example of the science curriculum we offer at Clair Tappaan Lodge. We take students through a section of the latest Mountain Meadows Health Assessment Protocol developed by researchers at UC Davis. Van Norden Meadow, an easy walk straight down the hill from the Lodge, is a critically important wetland habitat at the headwater of the South Fork Yuba River. (*Note: this is private property and we operate on this land with express permission from Sugar Bowl and Royal Gorge.*)

We do our survey in five parts. Students pair up and wade into the river with "D Nets" collecting Benthic Macro Invertebrates (aquatic bugs). They sort them into trays, looking for the sensitive indicator species such as mayflies, stoneflies, and caddis flies that can only thrive in creeks with low levels of sediment and pollution. After releasing the insects back into the creek, we do our "Herp" survey; the students spread out and slowly walk a section of meadow searching for snakes, lizards, and toads. Most groups find a few snakes, and we often see spectacular numbers of baby toads! Species and quantities are recorded, then we grab binoculars and identify the numerous bird species, often spotting the pair of osprey that hunt fish all summer



Cal Green job corp students studying aquatic insects.
Photo by Brent Rubey



Young Summer campers enjoying meadow assessment.
Photo by Jennie Bartlett

long. Students learn to identify wetland plants (grasses, rushes, and sedges) and complete a botanical transect noting the distribution of plant species in a given area. Lastly we take a core sample of soil, looking for coloration that indicates a healthy wetland.

Why do we care about wetlands? Sierra wetlands perform a critical "eco-system service" as giant "sponges", storing and slow-releasing snow melt that all Californians depend on for municipal water and agriculture. For animals, wetlands provide some of the richest and most diverse habitats. Through their ability to filter water and mitigate erosion, wetlands are critical to the trout and salmon that live in Sierra streams. Our Van Norden wetland, like many, is threatened by potential development and by climate change.

By studying this wetland, students learn how their lives are connected to and dependent upon healthy Sierra ecosystems.

How You Can Help

We still have space and scholarship money for more schools this year. Give us a contact at your favorite school—an inspired teacher or involved parent—and we'll make a fantastic field trip happen for them!

Contact Peter Mayfield 530-205-6245,
peter@sierraexperience.org.

Clair Tappaan Lodge:
<http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/lodges/ctl/>

Conservation Forum

Is Recreation Detrimental to American Landscapes?

By Rex Burress

Across the Feather River at Oroville, CA, on the rock jumbles below Fish Barrier Falls, I saw a curious contingent of people clambering over the lichen-clad bedrock intently watching some odd mechanical movement on the ground.

Finally, I deduced they were a club operating remote-controlled miniature off-road vehicles (ORV)! The grown-up games seemed harmless, but later I found the sparse vegetation battered and moss scraped off the rocks of a habitat as sensitive as the desert where it takes years to restore certain plants, plus the litter-signs that were left denoting mankind's passage is apparently inevitable.

In this industrial invention age, an overwhelming number of mechanical devices have been produced to provide recreationists with tools to attack various environments. The effect has been multiplied by a multitude of games, each requiring a certain amount of space and equipment for their operation. Little thought has been given to the consequences that some of these devices have on natural habitats, but the effects are quite evident after some time.

Not only are there miniature ORVs that require a certain terrain, but there are full-sized ORVs tearing up vast areas of desert back country, National Forests, and challenging land all over America. It's difficult to find any wild countryside free of vehicle tracks, litter, and signs of usage, not to mention the unseen perils like noise and air pollution that the ORV engines leave behind.

Once I was startled to find pieces of brightly colored rubbery debris scattered in one of my favorite woodlands, and I discovered the reason when I saw a group of paintball recreationists playing their game of shooting balls of paint at opponents.

Snowmobiles roar through the wilderness, leaving no peace for the wildlife, and inflicting aesthetical damage to the pristine landscapes. The tendency is to break new ground, just like the pioneer Mountain Men, only on a vastly larger scale. A few harmless tracks have turned into a million vehicular gouges and pounding footsteps from an expanding human population. Even trails like the John Muir Trail in Yosemite have been rutted a foot deep by plodding vibram-padded feet. We are essentially loving some of our parks and primeval places to death. "Leave only footprints"?

When I started work on the naturalist staff with Oakland Parks, the recreation department was separate, and there was a certain pride in being in Parks. Then in this "merger" age, the departments were combined into "OPR," and recreation dominated, just as it has in many towns. Oroville has a "Parks and Trees Division," but operation of five museums is involved. The Feather River Recreation and Park District is focused first on recreation as the title indicates, and favors frisbee golf, dog parks and soccer fields.

Like John Muir, I have always encouraged people to "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Going to woods is going home...to look at nature's loveliness with understanding." John made those pleas when there were relatively few people in America, but now the population tide has turned up by millions, and more regulations are needed to preserve intact those places to go for meditation, exploration, and watching wildlife. "Save Some for Seeing!" Agriculture,

mining, and logging have already made inroads into America's land-inventory assets.

I have always been an advocate of nature hikes, photographing the out-of-doors, bird watching, rock hunting, and even hunting and fishing, so it puts the wildlife trekker in an awkward position to discourage other recreational activity. Giving thought to the way we use recreational equipment could be a starter to help preserve our natural heritage. Just as precious as remote sanctuaries are those "nature nearby" parks, tucked along a creek or a meadow, natural niches leading to grander heights.

In wildness is the preservation of the world. – Henry David Thoreau

Painting Along the Sierra Trails

By Diane Boyer

For a third year, Jane Risk and I participated in a National Sierra Club Outing, *Painting Along the Sierra Trails*. The National Outing was accommodated at Clair Tappaan Lodge situated at 7000 feet elevation at Donner Summit in Soda Springs, California in the center of the Tahoe National Forest.

Each morning, we gathered on the meadow in the cool of the morning, after breakfast and brief chores, to learn from our gracious leaders the destination of the painting class. We headed off in carpools to a nearby point, unloaded our gear, and hiked a short distance to some beautiful spot around Donner Summit: a granite encircled sparkling blue lake; an historic bluff site with rock walls and petroglyphs; a cool trek through a leafy forest toward a rocky peak; or a grassy meadow alongside a bubbling brook.

Susan Barry, our talented instructor, demonstrated a technique and offered suggestions as each painter concentrated to create his or her own interpretation of the scenery. The day was broken up by sack lunches, a cool swim, or an invigorating hike with spectacular views.

A few hours later, as the sun lowered, we packed up our paints and headed back to the lodge, looking forward to a refreshing shower, a tasty hot dinner, and an evening of camaraderie spent critiquing the day's creations and discussing our efforts at putting the beauty we had seen on paper.

Another great day on a National Sierra Club Outing at Clair Tappaan Lodge -- *Painting Along the Sierra Trails!*



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