



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

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Yahi Spring 2014 Outings and Events

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza

<http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/outing.htm>

Poisoning Our Water and Our Children's Future

by Dave Garcia, Yahi Group Political Chair



Hydraulic fracturing, (fracking), is the unconventional extraction process of drilling for gas and oil. Fracking fluid which is composed of millions of gallons of water, sand and toxic carcinogenic chemicals, is injected deep into the ground and into the well's horizontal extensions. The highly pressurized fracking fluid causes the targeted strata (rock) to fracture and release the gas and oil trapped in the strata.

Fracking is inherently dangerous because it poisons our water, air, soil, and the future. Fracking fluid is extremely toxic containing up to 29 suspected toxic carcinogenic chemicals. **One gallon of fracking fluid can contaminate up to one million gallons of groundwater**, a one to one million contamination ratio.

California Water Contamination

In November 2013, Vintage Production Co. was fined \$60,000 the maximum penalty allowable under the state water code for dumping a mere 200 gallons of frack wastewater into an unlined sump. Carcinogenic benzene which causes aplastic anemia and leukemia was one of the chemicals found in the frack wastewater. The EPA has a maximum contamination level regulation of 5 ppb (parts per billion) for benzene in public drinking water systems.

This incident occurred in the fertile farmlands of Shafter California, in an almond orchard where farmers did not own the mineral rights beneath their orchards. Those mere 200 gallons contaminated the soil and had the potential to contaminate 200 million gallons of groundwater, and that was why the Regional Water Quality Control Board levied the maximum fine.

Kern County farmer Fred Starrh has been exposed to the poisonous consequences of petroleum wastewater which poisoned his 6,000 acre family farm of almonds and pistachios. Aera Energy lost an \$8.5 million judgment to Fred Starrh for poisoning the farmer's groundwater and livelihood with boron and radioactivity.

Air Contamination

In November 2013, EPA investigators were sickened by toxic vapors as they toured a South L.A. urban oilfield at University Park, a half mile from USC. The facility has had over 250 complaints of foul odors and toxic fumes from the surrounding neighbors. The EPA is still investigating the violations.

A hospital study found that children ages 6-9 in the Barnett Shale fracking area had a three times higher asthma rate than the Texas state average.

Wyoming residents who live near the gas fields complain of watery eyes, shortness of breath and bloody noses. All the frack wells there create high ozone levels which exceed the EPA's maximum healthy limit and have posted readings worst than the worst smog days in Los Angeles in both the 2009 and 2010 years.

Poisoning Our Future

Groundwater is our largest source of liquid freshwater which is integral for our agriculture and domestic use. Fracking requires 1 to 3 million gallons of frack fluid. The oil industry indicates that 60-80% of frack fluid remains in the well after stimulation, roughly 600,000 - 2 million gallons of frack fluid. Frack fluid has a one to one million contamination ratio for groundwater.

Industry studies show wells incur age related degradation with a 50% leakage rate after only 8 years of age. Leakage and contamination will eventually occur from frack wells and with 2 million gallons of frack fluid in the well capable of contaminating 2 trillion gallons of groundwater from just one well.

Water is life. If we poison our aquifer we will destroy our number one industry, agriculture. We will poison our domestic water supply which over 60% of Butte County residents depend on. We will forfeit our future prosperity and the prosperity of our children.

Support Butte Citizens Action Network on a fracking moratorium for Butte County. Watch for local activities, and sign our petition.

Butte Citizens Action Network
www.facebook.com/frackfreebuttecounty
PO Box 6395, Chico, CA 95927
1-888-358-5556



Yahi Club News

Yahi Group Spring 2014 Program Meetings

By Suzette Welch, Program Chair

Two Program Meetings remain in our schedule. These meetings will be held at Chico Branch Library on the corner of East First Avenue and Sherman. The meetings will start at 7PM with refreshments served. Non Sierra Club members are always welcome.

On **March 13, 2014** Dave Nopel will show pictures and talk about experiencing and exploring the natural world and as he said "a lifetime of rambling in California."

David along with Marti Leicester wrote a book called "The Humboldt Wagon Road." The book contains information about the history of the Humboldt Road and has many historical photographs.

David acquired his interest in history and historical photographs from his father John Nopel. You can currently see John Nopel's historical photographs at the Chico Museum, 141 Salem Street in Chico.

On **May 22, 2014** we will be showing the video **Green Fire**, film about the life and accomplishments of Aldo Leopold one of the most important conservationists of the twentieth century.

Yahi Group 2014 ExComm Elections

By Laurel Heath

We would like to welcome to our ExComm Board for 2014, Sharon Fritsch and a returning member David McKinney. Sharon will take on the duties of secretary, and David will help out with our email lists.

We would also like to thank the Board members that are leaving us: John Hollister and Lorna Cunkle. Their work, dedication and participation is greatly appreciated.

Our two co-chairs remain the same this year: Suzette Welch & Laurel Heath. And because we have two co-chairs we will not have a vice president position for this year. Celeste Garcia also remains on the Board and is a valued contributor.

Sierra Club Blogs

The National Sierra Club has more than a dozen blogs on topics ranging from wildlife to green lifestyles, activism to current events. Subscribe, and have our blogs delivered directly to your dashboard on Google, Yahoo!, MSN, and many other services. Just click the "RSS Feed" button below the blog you want to subscribe to and choose your service!

<http://sierraclub.org/blogs/>

Check the Yahi Group Blog for up-to-date news of interest to local activists:

<http://yahinews.blogspot.com/>

If you have items of interest you would like posted on the Yahi blog, you can join the blog as a writer, or you can send items for posting by contacting yahinews@comcast.net.

Fern Canyon Hike: July 31-August 4

by John Hollister



Visit one of California's most beautiful locations in the North Coast Redwoods. The Sierra Club is planning a car camping trip to Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park from July 31 through August 4 this coming summer. In a secluded setting we will take hikes through old growth redwood giants, through the world famous fern canyon (see picture), and to the gorgeous Gold Bluff's beach. During our trip we will undoubtedly see the huge Roosevelt Elk that reside in the park. We

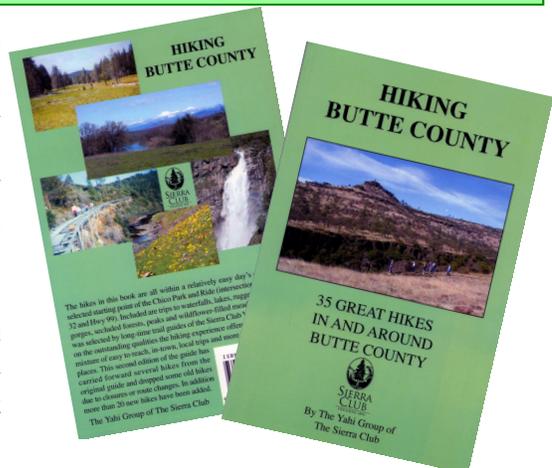
will be tent camping from July 31 through August 4. We will have two campsites reserved for our group at \$10 to \$20 per night, depending on the number of campers and vehicles. These campsites need to be paid for in advance. You are welcome to come on the day of your choice and leave the same day. You may make your own reservations for separate campsites through reserveamerica.com. Whichever you choose please let the leaders know so we can make arrangements. The leaders are Jeanne at 321-7279 and John at 966-7104. This will be a spectacular trip.



Hiking Butte County

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

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



Yahi Conservation Report: Local Activism Can Work

By Grace Marvin, Yahi Group Conservation Chair & BEC Advocacy Chair

Would you like an energy company to frack near you?

California Senate Bill 4 was the fracking regulation bill that was passed in December, 2013. (Fracking or hydraulic fracturing is an attempt to flush out oil or gas from deeply recessed/hidden pockets of the earth.) But Sierra Club-California and other organizations find SB4 very weak in providing the protections we need for our water, air, agriculture, health, and environment. (Did you know that fracking has increased the prevalence of nearby earthquakes?) Moreover, even weaker SB 4 *interim* rules are in effect until 2015, so that oil and gas companies are finding that now is an especially good time to use fracking and other unconventional methods, *e.g.*, acidization, to extract oil and gas. (Currently, the term used for all such methods is “well stimulation,” since it encompasses more than just “fracking.”)

In the meantime, millions of gallons of water are used and abused all over our country (and elsewhere). As Dave Garcia, our Yahi Group's fracking moratorium leader, has often pointed out, not only are there thousand of gallons used to extract oil and gas from any one deeply recessed pocket of the earth, but every one gallon of highly toxic fracking water pollutes one million gallons of water. Most of that water stays in the ground, either as a way to dispose of it, or by accident – since well casings frequently fail/ leak. All that water is no longer available for earthly or human consumption.

Statewide, important action is taking place to counter dangerous well stimulation. For example, concerned water wonks are engaged, daily, in highly educational conversations about the health, *e.g.*, asthma, and environmental effects of well stimulation (one effect of which is earthquake stimulation), while they are sharing research studies from all over the country. And a state senator from California (who is better known for her health policies) is reportedly going to back a fracking moratorium bill that has elicited the support from major environmental organizations. This is different from the last legislative term when there were numerous fracking bills competing for attention.

At the same time, most of us know that the Governor has declared that California is in a drought -- something that we see in our everyday lives. For example, 17 or more California communities are likely to be completely drained of water very soon, rivers and stream are declining, crops are failing, and Sacramento citizens have been asked to cut back their water usage by 20%. **So, why is our Governor calling for fracking and for building twin tunnels that will send north state waters south?** Especially notable are the shipments to corporate farmers in water districts down south, *e.g.*, in Westlands, whose farmers should be engaged in growing crops and employing methods that use far less water. (That is a topic covered by many other writers.)

So what can we who live a in a part of the state with very little political clout do? We cannot wait until a fracking bill MAY get passed statewide, especially if the Governor is

against it. But we in the north state make up less than 2% of the population, such that politicians will not cater to our needs.

Activists in one Yahli Group county are taking up a multi-pronged approach to get a moratorium on fracking. Not only members of the Yahli Group, but also members of Citizens Action Network, Butte Environmental Council, and Citizens Water Watch, are getting involved, each in their own way, to help place a moratorium on well stimulation in Butte County. That is, we want a stop on well stimulation until all the safety concerns have been appropriately addressed using the best available scientific research. And we have been recruiting citizens of all types – as well as other organizations -- to join us!

These tasks include:

1- We are educating citizens and ourselves about both the impact of well stimulation and its extent. One important point is that it has been extremely difficult to find out just how much well stimulation is going on in this county. Is this a trade secret? But we do know that more wells are in nearby counties. (Did you know that counties often share the same water aquifer? That means, that *for our own sakes*, we should not only be concerned about our own backyards but those of our neighbors as well -- whether they are neighbors in the same community or across county borders!)

2- We are carefully examining existing drilling, zoning and other regulations to see if they can be modified to include well stimulation. We, also, are discussing these changes with our Water Commissioners, county planners, and others. For example, we would like citizens (not just county personnel) to be part of the decision-making process regarding the development of all these wells. We need to know about old wells, too, since the energy companies seek to use these modern well-stimulation techniques on older wells to make them once-again productive.

3- Until fracking and other well-stimulation techniques can be done safely, many citizens would like to see a moratorium placed on these processes in our county. We are trying to convince members of the Board of Supervisors to issue such a moratorium. But if they will not vote for it, we have another option that is already underway: we are busily getting ready to place such an initiative on the next ballot, so the CITIZENS CAN VOTE ON IT. That involves getting the legally appropriate language, going through the county's bureaucratic processes (and paying fees), finding and training volunteer signature gatherers to collect the necessary amount of signatures (in less than 6 months) to place our initiative on the ballot, and educating the public on the issues -- so that they vote, knowledgeably, in November. (All this requires a search for donations and other funding, by the way.)

Stay posted, get involved as you can, and protect our planet, so you and yours can enjoy it!!

Please note: there are numerous energy company websites regarding fracking, but some of the ones that present a more environmentally friendly perspective are from Sierra Club-California, Center for Biological Diversity, Food and Water Watch, Earth Justice, and Frack-free Butte County (available on Facebook).



River Watcher:

When Bees Fly Free

by Rex Burress

Down by the riverside on a sunny day in early February, I was exulting in the first almond blossoms, as was a contingent of honey bees!

There had been a profusion of warm days in January, some that had hit the high 50's, and although honey bees can frolic forth from the hive in that range of temperatures, there were few flowering plants from whence they could extract nectar.

Like well-timed traffic lights, nature's timetable generally is so geared as to be in conjunction with the needs of other organisms. Anything out of synchronization spells trouble for simultaneous expectations! A drought and a lack of blossoms is bad news for bees...and for the proliferation of colonizing seeds.

I burrowed into the canopy of almond blossoms...to get the full force of their fragrance and flowering beauty, and being among the petals and a pantry of pollens also put me among the honeybees. I was nose to nose with the bees, but have no fear; the bees were focused on finding nectar, and the snooping human was of little concern. The flowers advertise flamboyantly for insect help!

It's really revealing to see a bee in a magnifier. They are hairy little buzzers, dusted with yellow specks of pollen as they weave from blossom to blossom, spreading pollen particles of life as if in joyous jubilation, but keeping some stuffed in their leg baskets for use in the hive. The stuff that some think causes sneezes is carried back to home base, emptied into the waiting jaws of workers who tamp it in some of the cells, and then later mix it with processed honey to feed fellow bees.

Such love and devotion! The nectar becomes super charged in the field bee's stomachs, passed from mouth to mouth, and always, a certain portion goes into cells for storage. There is super conservation as if a super conservationist committee decides on the disposition of dwindling resources when weather extremes stop their foraging.

Probably a scout bee had reported the opening of the almond, and the field bees had embarked, like some military battalion plunging into the great unknown. I wondered where their home base was located, as traditionally their range is only about two miles. Maybe they had a colony in a hollow tree, as one swarm adopted the hole in our oak tree at the Feather River Nature Center one year.

Usually the hive is a manmade box tended by a beekeeper. The controlled units are a valuable aid in orchards when the bloom is on, and the thefts of hives in Butte County in recent times places a hardship on the rancher. Nut production is controlled by pollination, and there aren't enough wild bees of other species to cover the large orchards.

As I gazed at the beautiful golden *Apis mellifera*, I marveled at their many abilities to keep a complex social structure in order. Is it the "they know without knowing they know-function" that accounts for the ingenious hexagonal wax cells they mold into large sheets? Is it built-in information that directs the hive location, the central disposition of a queen in each colony, the nourishment of the larvae, the foraging of the field workers, the cell cleaners, the water carriers, the guards? Or are they under the command of an unseen Director? We study them, analyze the body, theorize over their organization, but still we are not into the brain and spirit of the animal itself, just as we are kept separated from the minds of all animals. The mind is a private thing!

*"There was an Old Man in a tree,
Who was horribly bored by a bee;
When they said, 'Does it buzz?'
He replied, 'Yes, it does!
It's a regular brute of a bee!"*

--Edward Lear

Conservation News

Environmental Coalition Community Gathering and Other Upcoming Events

By Laurel Heath

On March 7th there will be an Environmental Coalition Community gathering at the C.A.R.D. Center located at 545 Vallombrosa Ave. in Chico from 5:30pm-8:30pm. This event will bring together local environmental organizations in order to share their goals and achievements. We would strongly encourage you to attend and learn more about these groups to broaden your perspective about what environmental groups are doing in Chico and to perhaps become more active environmentally.

Other events that are taking place in the near future are:

- **March 6-7: This Way to Sustainability Conference.** This year's theme is Food & Farming. On Friday, the 7th, the University Farm will give a brunch & a tour to highlight sustainability practices they use.
- **April 19: Earth Day in Bidwell Park**
- **April 19: Celebrate the jewel at the Nature Center in Bidwell Park**
- **April 22: BEC Earth Day Concert**
- **May 3: Endangered Species Faire** at One Mile Group Picnic Area. If you would like help out with the Sierra Club table at the Endangered Species Faire please call Laurel at 530-343-3290.
- **June 7: Chico Bicycle Music Festival**
-

For more information about these events you can go to www.becnet.org, call 891-6424 or Laurel at 343-3290.



Frack-Free Butte County

<http://frackfreebuttecounty.nationbuilder.com/>

Our Mission is to PROTECT the water, people and environment of Butte County from risks associated with extreme fossil-fuel extraction technologies, such as hydraulic fracturing, aka 'fracking'

Our goal is to provide Butte County voters a chance to vote YES on a MORATORIUM on enhanced well stimulation methods, such as 'fracking,' 'acidization,' and on the disposal of wastes resulting from these practices.

Our strategies include:

- Encouraging County officials to support a moratorium on fracking and other hazardous fossil fuel extraction practices.
- Recruiting and training teams of volunteers to help gather signatures and to educate voters
- Garnering support and volunteers from a wide variety of groups throughout the County
- Amassing at least 15,000 signatures to place a citizens initiative on the ballot for Nov. 2014 election
- Collaborating with county-wide Voter Registration efforts to encourage strong voter participation

Join us Sunday, March 16, 1:30pm-5pm at the Chico Women's Club 3rd St/Pine St. to find out how you can help. (See flyer on the last page of this newsletter.)

www.facebook.com/frackfreebuttecounty

YAH! Club Information

Executive Committee

Co-Chair: Laurel Heath, 343-3290, laur3290@gmail.com
Co-Chair: Suzette Welch, 342-9214, booksontape@rocketmail.com
Secretary: Sharon Frisch, safritsch@comcast.net
Board Member: Dave McKinney, 570-1342 or daviddryfly@comcast.net
Board Member: Celeste Garcia, 533-2357, celesterdh@mynvw.com

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Newsletter Information

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For advertising, contact Celeste Garcia, 533-2357, celesterdh@mynvw.com.

For changes in mailing address or email address, contact Sierra Club Member Services: membership.services@sierraclub.org, or (415) 977-5500.

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

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

The Last Word



FRACK FREE BENEFIT

Great music, fun, food and drinks
Sign our petition to place moratorium on Nov. ballot
Latest local info on fracking
Join the fun and help us with donations and petitions

Sunday, March 16, 1:30pm-5pm
Chico Women's Club 3rd St/Pine St

Support our campaign for a county moratorium on fracking
Help protect our **water, food and farms** in Butte County

\$10 donation LIVE MUSIC \$10 donation
MaMuse/ John-Michael Sun/ Steve Cook

Info - <http://frackfreebuttecounty.nationbuilder.com>
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