



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

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Yahi Spring 2015 Outings and Events

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza

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

Yahi Group Joins New Sierra Club Web Universe

By Louise Casey, Yahi Webmaster

The YAH! Group has a new website. The National Sierra Club offered local Groups and Chapters a web server that integrates Group, Chapter and the National information in a way that has never been possible before.

On the new YAH! site, you will find all of the things you are accustomed to finding – outings and events, club and program information, local environmental news and opinion. Just click on the words in the **blue navigation bar** under the heading photo to check each section.

The Outings and Events link in the navigation bar will take you to the new **Outings and Events calendar**. The calendar can be view in list form or calendar form and events may be automatically tied to Google maps, so directions are easy.

Local and national environmental news and action opportunities will be incorporated into the YAH! site automatically, connecting members with members across California and across the US for effective action.

Traveling? Because local Groups and Chapters are using a common calendar, you can find hikes and events anywhere in the nation by entering a zip code or city and state in the GO LOCAL section of the national Sierra Club home page (logo in upper left corner of the Yahi site pages will take you to the National Sierra Club page). Just enter a zip code, then click through the appropriate link to see activities. www.sierraclub.org.

Check out the new YAH! web home at: www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yahi

Yahi Club News



Laurel Heath, Celeste Garcia and Suzette Welch were re-elected to the Sierra Club Yahi Group Board of Directors. Their length in office will be two years.

Suzette Welch and Celeste Garcia will be co-chairs for the next two years. Laurel Heath will assume the position of Secretary. Sharon Fritsch and David McKinney will continue on with their second year on the Board.

Bird and Brunch, April 11

Mimosas/champagne

Crepes/salads/delectable deserts

Where: The Garcia's

When: April 11th, Sat 2015

Time: 9am to noon

Cost: \$25/person limited to 20 guests

Contact: Dave Garcia at rangerdave@mynvw.com

Upon payment you'll receive address and gate code.

Come bird with us and one of our local ornithologists, Dawn Garcia

Check Out Yahi Spring Outings

The Outings Leaders of the Yahi Group have many wonderful hikes and events planned for this spring. Among these are several Day Hikes:

- Paradise Lake
- South Rim Loop in Bidwell Park
- Table Mountain
- Dye Creek
- Deer Creek
- Feather Falls Pacific Crest Trail from Humbug Summit
- Colby Meadows

March 14-15, there will be a moderate to easy 2-3 mile backpack down 800' to camp beside boisterous Antelope Creek overnight.

Check out all Yahi Spring Outings and Events at www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yahi/outings

Yahi Club News

Yahi Program Meeting, March 12

By Suzette Welch



Geoff Fricker & Rebecca Lawton -

SACRAMENT: HOMAGE TO A RIVER.

Sierra Club - Yahi Group along with the Chico Friends of the Library will present a talk by Geoff Fricker on Thursday March 12, 2015 concerning the book that he and Rebecca Lawton wrote: **Sacrament: Homage to a River.**

The book traces local geology, water and mining history. Geoff will talk about links between the gold rush and current water issues. Geoff's photographs and Rebecca's scientific writing gives a picture of the Sacramento River and show how it has been abused and how it can be healed.

Geoff Fricker's talk is part of Sierra Club Yahi Group's series of program meetings which take place at Chico Branch Library – East First Ave. and Sherman. Social time with refreshments starts at 6:30 with program starting at 7 pm. The program is free and everyone is welcome.

Yahi Conservation Report

By Grace Maria Marvin, Yahi Group Conservation Chair

It's been a quiet month in Lake Wobegon, but not entirely so in the Yahi region. Many of us have been working (w/ both Sierra Club members and non) on fracking, oil trains, conservation-education events in Chico, saving trees on Oroville, and organizing a bus trip to Oakland for a national climate march on February 7. (The national Sierra club is one of several dozen sponsors/ partners.)

Socially-speaking: the Yahi Group has regular outings and has been working on creating a sharp Facebook page. We also have monthly Ex Com meetings and regular programs for the membership – often involving conservation-minded and/or trip reporting speakers; these are usually held at Butte County Library. The Yahi ExCom raised a few hundred dollars via fundraisers. With the help from its excellent treasurer, Paul Krause, and other activists, the Yahi generously donate money to help with the efforts of Frack-Free Butte County (FFBC).

Fracking

A few points about FFBC, since I reported on its activities in last year's MLC reports:

1- FFBC's Steering Committee includes several active Sierra Club members, including Dave Garcia, Joni Stellar, John Scott, yours truly, and others.

2- We were well represented at the 1/13/15 Butte County (BOS) Board of Supervisors' meeting where we urged the County to strengthen existing regulations and preparedness bearing on the transportation of Bakken oil in our county. (The Feather River Canyon is an extremely hazardous rail route.) They agreed to write the CPUC and the Office of Emergency Preparedness about our mutual concerns; most of these had also been explained to the BOS by their staff at that 1/13 meeting. But some of us also asked that the county look into alternative routes, even though such questions lie outside the board's authority. The next day, the Chico Enterprise Record, on its front page, featured canyon photos and a story about the railroad's dangers, i.e., spills and explosions. We were not able to get the BOS to raise questions about re-routing the rail transportation in their letters to the CPUC and OEP, but we did help raise their consciousness, sharpen some points for those letters, and we brought broader public attention to the issues.

FFBC and the Yahi Group co-sponsored a related program and filming event on 1/27/15 at CSU-Chico, and I was able to get the endorsement of the Mother Lode Chapter's Executive Committee for the 2/7/ 5 Climate Change march in Oakland. (I participate regularly in the Conservation and Executive committee meetings of the Mother Lode chapter, since I am a representative to both – as well as to Sierra Club-California).

3- We have been working on a **fracking ban** for Butte County for more than a year. With our instigation, the BOS (in April, 2014) asked the Planning Commission to draft a ban on fracking in our county. We were very disappointed that the excellent and in-depth Planning staff report - explaining the need for a ban-- did not result in the Planning Commission recommending the report's proposed ban to the BOS. Instead, the three (of five) Planning Commissioners who showed up for the meeting on 12/10/14 made a *No Recommendation* report to the BOS. Still,

we are hoping that that the BOS will indeed take the staff's ban more seriously-- than a weaker proposal-- at the 2/10/15 BOS meeting. We have seen evidence of pressure from oil companies to change the minds of the BOS, so FFBC is now busy trying to drum up support via 1- our appointments with individual members of the BOS, 2- asking the public to send letters and post-cards to them, and 3-getting publicity out to invite supporters to show up at the 2/10/15 BOS meeting. One of FFBC's most important points to the BOS is that we will not go away and that their decisions will affect the elect-ability of the BOS. Moreover, we see the Planning Commission's ban as more legally defensible than FFBC's earlier draft ordinance. Our ordinance will put placed on the ballot in 2016, since we had collected the requisite number of valid signatures. But who wants a lawsuit against the county? Stay tuned...

4-We are also eager to learn more from national Sierra Club regarding the shift from fossil to alternative fuel sources. Moreover, we are learning about pipelines other than the Keystone Pipeline. We hope that the national club will raise awareness about the problems already created about those pipelines as well.

Water Issues

As the Sierra Club representative to, and the Advocacy Co-Chair of, Butte Environmental Council (BEC), I am made aware of many other environmental issues. Of special interest are **water issues, e.g., groundwater, transfers, and tunnels**, and now the **inappropriate removal of trees** by utility companies. Thus, I was glad to be on a recent CNRCC/ Sierra Club-CA call discussing WATER issues, and I am delighted that our Yahli group member, Carol Perkins is now staying in touch with Sierra Club staff member Annie Pham regarding groundwater management. (Carol is a very active and conscientious water consultant for BEC.) Annie Pham is retiring, however, and so Carol will need to find out a new best Mother Lode Chapter water issues contact.

Trees

Regarding trees, we have been very concerned about tree removals by PG&E occurring without preceding public hearings/ reviews. Tree removals have already taken place in Oroville, and in the Chico environs. Please see back issues of the *Chico Enterprise Record* and the *Oroville Mercury*. Several Yahli volunteers (including yours truly), Citizens Action Network, and BEC volunteers have been going to court hearings, tree protests, and more.

Get Involved!

Patricia Puterbaugh has been writing comments for many years regarding logging projects in the Lassen Nation Forest (LNF), but our club really NEEDS Yahli volunteers to get involved with other issues as well - with **clear-cutting** outside of LNF of major significance. If you are willing to help direct such an effort please contact me at 530-893-1994. By the way, feel free to call me if you 1- want to get connected with any other ongoing volunteer activities, or 2- wish to start one yourself. We just must be mindful of Sierra Club Conservation policies.

Thank you

River Watcher:

Sierra Club: The Race for Space

By Rex Burress

With the human colonization of most earthly living spaces, there have been conflicts between natural conditions and the activities of mankind.

We have seen the contentious issue of space-use in the Oroville Cemetery dispute over established trees and P.G.E. gas lines. Trees are valuable to our existence and wildlife's needs wherever they grow, and the majestic sycamores bordering the cemetery were/are additionally prized as a historical living presence of beauty in the link with graves of the dead.

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company contended that their space for the pipeline was being endangered by the trees' roots, although that condition wasn't evidently considered when the pipes were placed. Such land-use conflicts have raged since the expansion of the human race began.

Not only did people spread in Europe and succeed in chopping down most of their forests, but the event of the Pilgrims reaching American shores started a slow decline of the eastern hardwood forests. In the name of agriculture, deemed necessary for the survival of mankind, the woodlands were cut and stumps removed to make space for corn and other crops. Trees were thought of as an obstacle to progress, and the trend was continued right on to the West as settlers chopped down trees along the river riparian zones to make cabins and boats, gather firewood, and feed their livestock the fibrous inner bark of cottonwoods.

The changes weren't noticed much at first, but as human populations expanded, the land-clearing zest was extended right into California--right into the redwoods--right into the oak woodlands that covered much of the Sacramento Valley. It was said that prior to the agricultural takeover, valley oaks were so prevalent that Spanish explorers in 1820 traveled in full armor from the Sacramento River to the Chico region and were in the shade of oak groves all the way!

In present times, you speed across the valley on paved roadways and see spacious farmland stretching to the horizon with maybe a few isolated oaks, but the norm is one continuous field free for the big soil machines to make an uninterrupted run from one end to the other. When some old monarch oak dies, it is not replaced, and it took up to 400 years to reach its upper status.

Replanting is central to maintaining our wild arboretums, but attaining that space in the farmlands is nigh impossible. Consequently for natural habitats, croplands, deemed a necessity to feed a populous world, has replaced woodlands and flower fields in many places. Even if vital for food and livelihoods, it is regrettable to lose space for wild-lands...at least to those

who in the love of nature hold communion with her various forms. The fracking issue intrudes on the land, too, and maybe decreases the ecological quality of habitats. Plus hikers need space to hike!

We occasionally get a glimpse of Californian times as it was before the invading horde of Spanish herds, gold-miner destruction, and real estate claims came into being. Except for parks and refuges, nearly every inch of the state...of the nation...is now in private hands and exploitable.

When John Muir came to California in the spring of 1868, he crossed the valley from San Francisco to Yosemite on foot, and he said you couldn't take a step across the entire distance without striking a flower. That of course, was before fences parceled off the land and before the plow opened Mother Earth to full exposure and agriculture...and before the trees were slaughtered.

We can only lament about land over-run in the past and protect what little wild space is left. Are we preserving enough space on earth for trees to grow and animals to live? Bears, lions, elephants?

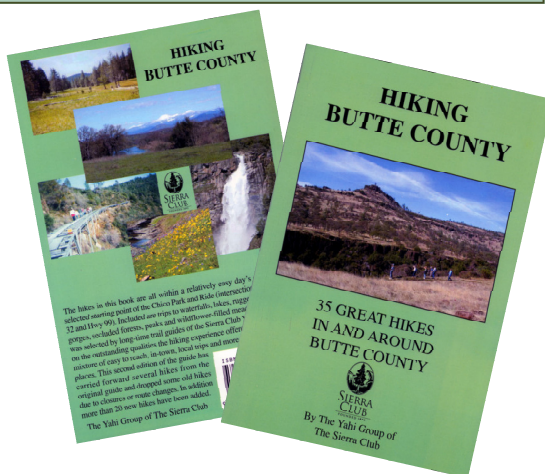
Once there was a five-mile swath of giant redwoods in the Oakland, CA hills--some of the ancients being 32-feet in diameter--and within a decade in the late 1800's, every towering relic was cut. Thus the mountain Sequoias would have been totally cut if Muir and other defenders of wildlands had not helped to establish park protection. "Habitat is home. Give them a home and they will come."

"Going to the woods is going home." --John Muir

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.



AquAlliance Water Forum March 12, 2015

Chico – On March 12, 2015, Butte County, the City of Chico, and AquAlliance will host a forum to provide the public with an update on local groundwater issues and the challenges and opportunities to sustain our water resources. The main features of the program will be the current groundwater conditions compiled from over 100 wells, updates on state and local efforts to better understand and protect groundwater, a new film about the Owens Valley from CSU Chico entitled *Never Enough*, and an update on federal and state water transfers from the Sacramento Valley.

Speakers include:

Paul Gosselin, Director, Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation
Christina Buck, PhD., Water Resource Scientist, Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation

Jesse Dizard, PhD., Professor at CSU Chico
Barbara Vlamis, Executive Director for AquAlliance

“With very dry conditions for the third straight year, we want our residents to have information on the status of Butte County groundwater and how our communities, economy, and the environment may be impacted,” stated Butte County Supervisor Maureen Kirk.

What: Butte County Groundwater Forum

When: Thursday, March 12, 2015 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Where: Chico City Council Chambers, 411 Main Street in Chico

Who: Butte County, City of Chico, AquAlliance

Background Information

Information about Butte County’s Groundwater Monitoring: <http://www.buttecounty.net/waterresourceconservation/GroundwaterLevels.aspx>

Information on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act:

<http://www.buttecounty.net/waterresourceconservation/SustainableGroundwaterManagementAct.aspx>

<http://www.water.ca.gov/cagroundwater/>

The film, *Never Enough*

This is a cautionary tale about where some of Los Angeles' water comes from. The stark landscape of the Eastern Sierras, Mono Lake and Owens Dry Lake illustrate the consequences of efforts in the early 20th century to move water from the Owens Valley to Los Angeles. Emphasis is on the results of 100 years of water transfers from this region averaging 5-7 inches of rain per annum – by contrast, the LA basin receives approximately 10-15 inches – and the abiding sense of loss felt by the Paiute-Shoshone people whose ancestors first settled what is now the Owens Valley. Viewers are introduced to locals with unique insight into the grass roots impacts of decisions taken far, far away. Tribal elders speak about how reverence for the ecosystem has been replaced by market economies. Biologists share frank assessments of the economic consequences of mismanaged water resources. Discussions with environmentalists demonstrate that beyond the passionate rhetoric, long-range priorities are essentially consistent with those of other interest groups, e.g., farmers, municipalities and even some industries dependent upon natural resources such as timber, tourism and commercial fisheries. In short, what is presented are oral histories from keen observers who are part of key transformations that illustrate the relationships between people and water in rural and urban communities.

Water Transfers

The Bureau of Reclamation and San Luis/Delta Mendota’s 10-Year Water Transfer Program

http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=18361

<http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvp/ltwt/>

Other transfers

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/water_transfers.shtml

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/applications/transfers_tu_orders/index.shtml

YAH! Club Information

Executive Committee

Co-Chair: Suzette Welch, 342-9214, booksontape@rocketmail.com

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Newsletter Information

Yahi News is published four times a year, in March, June, September, and December, by the Yahi Group of the Sierra Club, P.O. Box 2012, Chico, CA 95927.

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



Photo by Marie Scarme

GOING, GOING... GONE?

Sea turtles date back nearly 90 million years and are among the Earth's oldest surviving species. All 6 species of sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Sierra Club has mounted a major effort to defend and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever.

Help protect our animal friends; because once they're gone, they're gone. Join Sierra Club now.

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 Card Number _____ Exp. Date ____/____
 Signature _____

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Tell them if you want to receive only Yahi Group emails, or Yahi Group emails along with Sierra Club national and/or state emails.

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