



Yahi Group



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

News Articles Programs Hikes and Outings Meetings Events

The Feather River Land Trust

by Joseph A. Abbott

"Kudos to Paul Hardy and the Feather River Land Trust (FRLT). . . Real progress in preserving . . . wonderful natural landscapes from changes of development," "organizations such as the FRLT should be supported by citizens who value these goals" are a few of the plaudits around Plumas County to the emergence of the newest conservation effort in our area.

It started over a decade ago with passage of the American Farm and Ranch Protection Act (updated in 1997 as Public Law 105-34) designed to save family farms and ranches. In November 2002, US voters approved ballot measures amounting to \$5.7 billion for the acquisition and restoration of more land for open space. Most Americans want land conservation, and saving "the farm" certainly qualifies as laudable.

At least half the land in the contiguous 48 states qualified for protection under the 1997 law, and environmental interests quickly seized on it as a method of preserving open space where Federal, State, and local governments failed. The route environmentalists chose was the land conservation trust. By 2002 there were 177 registered local land trusts in California alone. Combined land "set-asides" of Federal, State, and trust lands presently total 2 acres of the entire US surface area for every American man, woman, and child, and it's all become Big Business. The three biggest land trusts have combined assets of over \$3 billion; the Nature Conservancy's income alone was \$490 million in 1998.

A land trust is a nonprofit, tax exempt corporation that protects non-government land through donation, easement, or purchase. The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land are well-known national land trusts. Although primarily designed to protect farms and ranches, a land trust may focus on conservation-oriented projects such as watershed, wetland, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, forests, geology, and land of historic or cultural value. Land trusts may make purchases to form public parks. However, land trusts are frequently a tool to reduce taxes while farming, ranching, and/or logging continues on the property at the same pace. Land trusts are usually well-developed commercial operations.

The most powerful tool of the land trust is the so-called conservation easement. Easements limit a property's use for the general public's benefit



Paul Hardy Executive Director of the Feather River Land Trust.

and thus qualify as a tax exempt charitable donation. However, an easement does not confer outright public access. Easements on properties do not automatically make them public parks. A property easement is legally binding, recorded on the property deed, and continues to be part of all future land transfers. The easement binds present and future landowners, although they still retain the property and are allowed to sell the land or leave it to their heirs, who also continue as landlords. The land trust only owns an easement, not the land. As a public benefit corporation, a land trust is responsible for the land's actual use which it does by monitoring and enforcing every easement provision and correcting any violation.

The incentive to grant a conservation easement is a reduced tax bill. To qualify with the IRS, an easement must provide a public benefit such as preventing land development for tract homes. This allows for the so-called charitable deduction. Federal and State tax breaks are accomplished through property assessment reductions. Section 508 of PL 105-34 and Section 170 of the IRS Code also provide incentive through inheritance exemptions which, by 2002, were up to a maximum of \$500,000. Another plus is deferment of tax payments for two years

after death. State tax laws follow the Federal. These "tax reform" benefits of PL 105-34 are sizable, especially with a large inheritance at stake.

The Feather River Land Trust was incorporated in February 2000 (California Corporation number C2218214). Its offices in Quincy, California, the administrative seat of Plumas County, are located in the Court Street Professional Building. The Trust's mission is to "conserve, restore and manage lands that make the Feather River region special." To this end, the Trust holds conservation easements, acquires land, and manages Trust properties, along with providing "technical assistance" and public "education."

The executive director of the Trust is Paul Hardy, a Plumas County native, born and raised in Portola, and educated at UC Davis and the University of Arizona. Paul is an engaging, honest, well-spoken young man with high principles. The Trust's board president is environmentalist Michael Yost, whose wife, Sally, is president of the local Audubon Society.

The Trust's membership of almost 500 includes a cross section of the Plumas community from "movers and shakers" of the county's elite to its more ecologically-minded semi-professionals, as well as students from the nearby Feather River College. The Trust's operating budget is mostly supported from membership dues and donations. Since the Trust is a legally registered non-profit (501 c 3) registered charity (California CT# 117574), donations and membership are Federal and State tax deductible. Membership brings satisfaction that one is protecting those special places they love, access to the in-house library of some 200 volumes, receipt of the trust newsletter

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Yahi Group—Sierra Club
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First Annual Yahi Garden Tour

It was a win-win situation. Our Yahi treasury got a much needed boost of \$1354, and gardeners and viewers had a good time. The first Annual Garden Tour was held April 26th. After a gloomy, rainy week with poor ticket sales the sun came out to brighten a great Sierra Club Day. One location sold fifty six tickets during the tour; a total of 260 people attended.

The group visited six gardens. Each displayed the unique character of its owner-designer. Two were in the new Nob Hill subdivision; one was embellished with yard art and a small pond. Wes and Phyllis Dempsey's had a potting bench, small greenhouse and delightful volunteer Johnny-jump-ups. Rick Balch displayed his green thumb with many flowers and a method of handling raspberries that drew comments from many visitors. Two older homes with relatively new yards displayed gardens in progress. Palm Avenue's inviting back yard deck overlooked old fashioned flowers in profusion; plants were offered for sale as well. Under large black walnut and pecan trees at Joanne Gerson's the viewers wandered past a soothing pond and down bark strewn paths into the back "40" to see a newly emerging landscape. Doug Persky's yard was what one would expect of a Sierra Club member; lots of California natives, fava beans grown to enrich the soil and working compost bins-and it is pretty too.

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.

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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 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 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

From the ExCom

By Janice Heckerson

Here is a rundown on some of what the ExCom (Executive Committee) has been doing since January.

Terry Davis, Vicki Lee and Dottie Higbee visited us from Mother Lode Chapter in January. They explained the work and financing of the chapter. Much of their money supports lobbying in Washington and in Sacramento. Much of Yahi money supports our newsletter and training for outing leaders.

John Hollister and Stephen Sayre continue to oversee forestry activity. Comments were sent on an Administrative Study for a timber project that could have an adverse effect on the spotted owl population in Lassen and Plumas National Forests. The study was recently canceled.

ExCom members expressed concerns over proposed changes to the Federal Clean Water Act. All are urged to investigate proposed changes and write a letter to their Congressional representatives expressing their thoughts as these changes are being considered.

ExCom approved a motion to oppose changes to the Williamson Act. California is proposing financial cut backs which would affect tax payments provided by the Act on agricultural land.

The Greenspace Committee, John and Wendy Woods, continues to attend City and CARD meetings regarding development of neighborhood parks.

There were two fund raisers in April and one in May. Alan Mendoza headed a booth at BEC Endangered Species Faire, where we made \$85 on sales of the Trail Manual and a few T-shirts and cards. Alan thanks John, Richard, Sharon, and all who worked on the Faire. Betty Volker headed a Garden Tour that grossed \$1,349 to be applied to newsletter expenses. A big thanks to Betty and all others who worked or provided their gardens for this event. A garage sale fund-raiser was also held May 17, coordinated by Joy Mendoza and Goodie Sweatt.

Alan Mendoza has compiled the draft for a new guide on 30 trails in or near Butte County. He needs help from volunteers experienced in layout, map drawing, photography and cover design. Proceeds from future sales will cover expenses for Yahi Group.

ExCom approved a motion to request that non-members contribute \$2.00 for each outing they attend. This will help to cover leader training and

Yahi Group of the Sierra Club

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Butte Ordinances Threaten Northstate Conservation

By Barney Flynn

After a decade of progress, northern watersheds face a full-scale assault from forces opposed to conservation land ownership and the improvement of habitat on conservation lands. This assault consists of two ordinances proposed by the Butte County Board of Supervisors. One ordinance, the so-called "Section 26 Ordinance," passed on April 22 with Supervisor Jane Dolan voting "No." The remaining "Section 24" ordinance is still up for consideration.

The Progress

Sacramento River progress has been marked by the acquisition of 14,000 acres of river habitat, the restoration of habitat on 4,000 acres, the establishment of several park areas, and the stabilization of endangered river habitat after decades of destruction. In addition, the riverbank land acquisition has made possible a whole new flood control and salmon gravel conservation program, based on natural river meander.

There are improved public access prospects. Sacramento River Partners is acquiring several park properties in Glenn County, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is about to announce access to its newly acquired refuge lands.

Meanwhile, migratory waterfowl wetlands habitat has expanded, both through hunting preserves and farm-based waterfowl habitat programs, which together have evolved into a Northstate waterfowl industry.

The Battle

The current battle is focused on Butte County, where land use laws are being altered to stop acquisition of conservation lands and choke off the environmental use of existing lands. The politics are clear: conservation, we are told, threatens "fires," "diseases," "property damage" and "harms people." This language is from the ordinance itself.

The selling of the ordinances is based on tax-savings politics. Alleged injuries to the county (fires, diseases, etc.) would be shifted to the conservation perpetrators by using "impact fees." But neither the proposed ordinances nor any other county ordinance provide for such fees. Thus, as Butte County Counsel admits, there are no tax savings.

There is an *Alice in Wonderland*, *Wag the Dog* aspect to this: imaginary fires and diseases are paid for by imaginary impact fees which, in turn, produce imaginary tax savings. The reality is less amusing as, for example, in waterfowl wetlands conservation.

The ordinance blocks waterfowl conservation practices by requiring repeated permitting for

routine operations (which are allowed without permitting in neighboring rice fields). Thus a permit is required for "flooding" conservation wetlands, while similar "flooding" is not required for rice. This repeated permitting of routine conservation activities has nothing to do with the intent of Butte County land zoning which is "to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the County."

More importantly, a 300-foot buffer would be required around waterfowl ponds, presumably to protect neighbors. Thus, while neighboring rice fields have been butting up against each other for almost a century with no need for buffer protection, waterfowl ponds must suddenly be surrounded by 300 feet of barren ground. With such buffers, waterfowl farmers would be ineligible for the USDA easements that make these valuable wetland habitats possible.

The Solution

The Butte County battle over the use of conservation lands is not unique. A similar ordinance was defeated in Yolo County, and another effort was abandoned by Glenn County supervisors faced with potential lawsuit liabilities.

Because of the effect on farm-based waterfowl activities, Butte's Supervisors have temporarily deferred the "Chapter 24" ordinance while passing the "Chapter 26" ordinance which requires expensive "double permitting" of conservation work in the flood zones. However, the anti-conservation zealots, led by the Family Water Alliance of Glenn County, promise even more drastic ordinances while not compromising on present proposals.

Conservation has taken an increasingly important role in decisions about our resources. For example, the old solution to the Sacramento River flows was the "Red Bluff to Chico Landing" project which sought to channelize the river by covering the banks with rock. As new voices were heard, we have arrived at a meandering river solution with public ownership of the bankside river habitat, shielding private ownership from erosion. This will save hundreds of millions of dollars in public money, and preserve an invaluable riparian conservation resource.

As the conservation role expands, new responsibilities for county citizenship evolve. Thus, in the case of Butte County, it is appropriate to contact individual supervisors in the county, especially the key players, Supervisors Robert Beeler (BBeeler@buttecounty.net) and Mary Anne

Help Needed for Next Year's Garden Tour

By Betty Volker

Know anyone with a beautiful lawn / garden? Yahi Group had a wildly successful lawn and garden tour on April 26th. The event featured six Chico gardens. Thanks to Phyllis and Wes Dempsey, Charles Watson, Joanne Gerson, Kitty Courcier, Rick Balch and Chris and Doug Perske for opening up their spectacular gardens for the tour.

This was our first year of the garden show. The profit from this event stays in the Yahi group. Yahi needs the money to help pay for our wonderful newsletter. We need gardens and help with planning next year's garden tour. Would you be willing to help with 2004 garden tour? Or do you know someone with a great garden that should be on the tour? Call Betty Volker/Miller 345-7205 with names, gardens, suggestions, and help. We need ticket makers, flyer printers, publicity, writers, money takers, garden guides, and of course gardeners.

Pacific Crest Trail Association Work Party

The Pacific Crest Trail Association will have a work party on the Plumas National Forest June 17-21. The exact location will depend on snow conditions. Come join us for trail maintenance and give back to the trail you love.

Working from a car camp, we'll meet on Tuesday, June 17, to set up camp and orient ourselves, do our work June 18-21, then break camp Sunday. The PCTA and Plumas N.F. will provide all food and tools.

A refundable \$25 deposit will hold your spot. If interested, or for more information, call Rick Hein at (530) 753-6664, or e-mail him at mrnature@cwnet.com, or mail your check to him

Sierra Club

Note Cards

Buy Sierra Club blank note cards directly from Yahi and help support your local chapter.

20 cards per box with 5 each of 4 different Sierra Club photographs.

Ed's Printing

- We encourage the use of recycled papers
100% recycle paper available
- We use vegetable based inks
- Paper sizes printed up to 18 x 24 in.

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Outings and Events

Non-Members Asked to Help Pay for Outings

The Yahi Group Executive Committee voted at its May meeting to request that non-Sierra Club members pay a voluntary donation of \$2 for participating in an outing. Why was this decided? Currently our outings program carries an annual cost of \$700-\$800. These costs include training new leaders, paying for first aid and CPR for leaders, maintaining and restocking all of our first-aid kits, liability insurance and the shared cost of printing, mailing and distributing the quarterly schedule. Previously there was no charge for attending a Yahi Group outing (other than carpooling and entrance fee expenses) unless the Club incurs direct costs such as the required fees for docent-led trips or for paying for a campground. The ExCom board felt that asking non-members to pay a small, strictly voluntary fee would help defer

the costs of keeping up the outings program and would provide current Sierra Club members with an additional benefit. Currently all costs for the outings program are borne only by Yahi Group members. Additionally, many outings require a great deal of voluntary time, expense and advanced planning and scouting by leaders.

Some people choose to not be Sierra Club members based on beliefs or political grounds, but still enjoy being a part of outings. The Yahi Group fully respects that choice and in no way wants to force anyone to become a member. Everyone is still welcome at all Sierra Club outings and no one will be turned away from an outing if they can't pay the suggested voluntary donation. In addition, there will be no donation asked for children of non-members under 18 years of age. Whether you are

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."

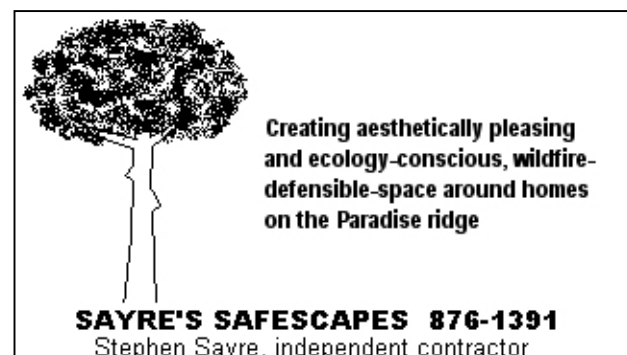
All activities: These are group outings. It is important that participants follow the instructions of the outing leader. Please be sure you are in adequate physical condition to undertake the activity you choose (see classifications for guidance). If you are unsure of the difficulty of the trip or of 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/ or call Skip Augur at 894-1366 to obtain a correction.



YAH! Group Summer 2003 Outings and Events

On-Going Wednesday Weekly Walks (grade 2, class A). Meet at Chico Park & Ride each Wednesday evening at 7PM for a 1 ½ hour creekside power walk along the creek. Wear tennis/walking shoes and bring water. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980 or alternative leader: Alan, 891-8789.

May

Saturday-Monday, May 24-26 – Mill Creek Memorial Day Backpack & Trail Maintenance (grade 3, class B) (educational). Join the Yahi Group for our annual Memorial Day weekend trail maintenance trip. We will hike 14-15 miles downstream starting at Upper Mill Creek (4000 feet) to Black Rock (2000 feet). On the way we hike through forests, enjoy wildflowers and follow along the creek. The Forest Service will provide tools and car shuttle back to our cars. Group size is limited, call for reservations. Return time around 6 PM Monday. Leader: Annette, 872-3557.

Wednesday, May 28, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Saturday, May 31 – Chico Mural Walk & Lunch (grade 1, class A). Stroll around downtown Chico to view the innovative murals followed by a group lunch. Cost: lunch only. Meet on the steps of Chico City Hall (Main St. and 4th St.) at 10AM. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

June

Sunday, June 1 – Coutolenc Park Hike & Swim (grade 1, class A). Did you know there are over 300 acres of undeveloped public land managed by the Paradise Recreation & Park District stretching from Coutolenc Road down to the West Branch Feather River? Let's explore this Park on an approximately 3-mile hike with about 760 feet of elevation loss and gain, some on old trails, some fairly steep cross-country. Meet at Paradise Albertson's at 10 AM, or next to the Archery Range by 10:30. Bring lunch, water, and swimsuits and plan to spend the day. Rain cancels. Leader: Stephen Sayre, 876-1391 or sayhart@infostations.com

Wednesday, June 4, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Saturday, June 7- Mountain Bike Ride to Rice Creek Falls (grade 5, class B). We'll ride by Wilson Lake, Feather River Meadows and have views of Mt. Lassen. The falls should be full from the snow melt. Bring properly maintained bike, helmet, tube patch kit, pump, lunch, lots of water and \$ for drivers. If the road is snowed in we'll go to Colby Meadows. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Larry, 342-7998, Asst. Leader: Dave, 533-2357.

Sunday, June 8 – Feather Falls Hike (grade 2, class A). Come see the lovely 640' falls in the late spring. A 9-mile loop with nice views of Frey Creek and Bald Rock Dome. The mostly shady trail is home to colorful dogwood, big leaf maple, black oak and madrone trees. If time permits we'll hike above the falls to cool off in the stream. Wear boots and bring lunch, water and carpool \$. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 8AM. Leader: Charles, 895-3045, Asst. Leader: Dave, 284-7434.

Wednesday, June 11, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday, June 12, 6PM - Yahi Program Meeting and Awards Potluck Conference room, Chico Library East 1st Ave. & Sherman. Featured Speaker Joe Abbott from Plumas County.

Friday, June 13 – Concert in the Park. A great night of music featuring danceable world beat with Spark & Cider. Meet at 6:30PM at Chico Paper Company corner (4th & Broadway). The concert is from 7PM to 8:30PM. Bring finger food to share, snacks and desserts. Lawn chairs are a good idea. Afterwards possible trip for yogurt or ice cream. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

Saturday, June 14 – Humboldt Road Moonlight Walk (grade 1, class A). Celebrate the full moon with a 4-mile walk down Humboldt Road. Great views of Chico and an opportunity to see some local history and critical areas of future development concern. Bring flashlight and water. Car shuttle required. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8PM. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

Saturday, June 14 – Full Moon Paddle. Join us on a calm, leisurely 4 mile paddle of the North Forebay in Oroville. Beavers, osprey, cormorants, great blue herons are just some of the wildlife we may encounter. You must have your own boat to attend. You must have a PFD for each person on your boat. Bring lunch, binoculars, and \$2 for the entrance fee. Limited to 20 people. Meet at Chico Park & Ride for self-organized carpool at 6:30PM or 7PM at North Forebay. Call leader to sign up. Leader: Dave, 533-2357.

Wednesday, June 18, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Friday, June 20 – Games Night & Pot-Luck. Bring your favorite board games and card games and a dish to share. Come prepared to have fun. Card tables and folding chairs needed. Call for location and time. Leader: Alan: 891-8789.

Saturday, June 21 – Deer Creek Hike (grade 1, class A). Take a 4-5 mile walk through the cool forest and late spring greenery as we follow the rush of Deer Creek. We'll begin at the trail just off of Highway 32. Bring water, lunch and carpool \$. Rain cancels. Return at approximately 3PM; about an 80-mile round-trip drive. Meet at

Chico Park and Ride at 8 AM. Leader: Charles, 895-3045.

Wednesday, June 25, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Friday, June 27 - North Rim Hike and Write (grade 2, class A). Join us for a relatively easy 6-mile morning walk to the end of the North Rim trail and back. In addition to plenty of water and a hat, bring along a notebook and a pen. Along the way, we'll write in response to interesting prompts. Don't worry: writing is optional. Approximately a 6-mile hike with a return time around 11:30 A.M. Meet at Chico Park and Ride at 7:00 A.M. Leader: Theresa, 899-7331 / tmarcis@shastacollege.edu

Friday-Sunday, June 27-29 – Castle Crags Camping and Hiking. Enjoy beautiful Shasta County for a weekend of tent camping, swimming, amphitheater programs and evening campfires. Day one, we'll hike along the crystal clear waters of the Sacramento River-an easy 3-mile roundtrip stroll. On Saturday, we'll join the Shasta Group for a strenuous (grade 2, class C), six-mile roundtrip hike up a steep (2200'), but very scenic trail to Castle Dome—spectacular views of Castle Crags and Mt. Shasta. On Sunday, we'll cool down with another easy, 3-mile roundtrip hike to beautiful, Hawaiian-like Mossbrae Falls to picnic and swim. For more information and to sign up call leader. Leader: Jeanne:899-9980; Asst. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491 and Peggy: 343-2549.

July

Wednesday, July 2, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday-Sunday, July 3-6 – Warner Mountain Backpack (grade 3, class B). A 15-17 mile loop trip in the remote, mystical Warner Mountains south of Alturas. We'll enjoy the wildflowers, pretty streams, great views of Mt. Shasta and Mt. Lassen and optional day hikes. We'll leave Thursday afternoon and stay at the Patterson Campground. On Friday we begin with an 800-900' elevation gain to reach the beautiful Summit Trail. Individual commissary. Call leaders to reserve space and get more information. Leader: Teresa, 899-7331 / tmarcis@shastacollege.edu, Asst. Leader: Claudine, 894-5096.

Saturday, July 5 – Mt. Pleasant Hike and Climb (grade 4, class C). A strenuous 16-mile round-trip hike with a 2000' elevation gain/loss along a beautiful section of the Pacific Crest Trail to the top of 7000' Mt. Pleasant. We'll start at Bucks Summit east of Bucks Lake. Nice views along the way of Gold and Silver Lake. From the top there will be views of the Feather River

Summer 2003 Program

YAH! PROGRAM MEETING AND AWARDS POTLUCK JUNE 12, 2003, 6:00 p.m. CONFERENCE ROOM, Chico Library East 1st Ave. & Sherman. Featured Speaker Joe Abbott from Plumas County (see front page article of this newsletter). We will be honoring our 25 and 50 year members, as well as give out Appreciation Awards to many of our members who have served the Yahi Group, more than average, with their time and efforts.

Canyon, Mt. Lassen, Bucks Lake and the distant Sierra Buttes. Meet at 7:30AM at the Chico Park & Ride or 8:15AM at the NW corner of the Wal-Mart parking lot in Oroville off of Oro Dam Blvd. Bring lunch, water, comfortable hiking shoes and carpool \$. Call leader in advance to confirm trip. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net. Asst. Leader: Charles, 895-3045.

Sunday, July 6 – Blue Lake Day Hike & Swim (grade 1, class A) (educational). This is an easy one-mile hike to beautiful Blue Lake in the Wild Cattle Mountain Potential Wilderness Area, just south of Lassen Volcanic National Park, in the upper Feather River watershed. Meet at Paradise Albertson's at 7:30AM or at the Chico Park & Ride at 8:15AM for the drive up Highway 32 and Wilson Road. Bring lunch, water and swimsuit. Leader: Stephen Sayre, 876-1391 or sayhart@infostations.com.

Wednesday, July 9, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Saturday, July 12 - Pulga Mountain Bike Ride (grade 4, class A). The old railroad town of Pulga is in the spectacular Feather River Canyon across from Hwy 70. We'll ride up the PG&E road which looks down on the Feather River, Grizzly Dome, and the Grizzly Tunnel. A 20-mile ride with a gradual 700 ft. climb through forest, fern grottos, 5 bridges, and great sections of decomposed granite. Bring helmets, gloves, water, lunch, and \$ for drivers. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8 AM. Return time around 3 PM; a 70-mile round trip drive. Leader Dave, 533-2357.

Saturday-Sunday, July 12-13 – Feather Falls Backpack (grade 2, class B). Backpack along a moderately-difficult 11-mile roundtrip trail to beautiful Feather Falls and then up past the falls alongside pretty Fall River to a rustic campsite. Here we can enjoy a relaxing afternoon of swimming, sunbathing, reading, card games, sketching, etc. Evening campfire of songs, stories and star gazing. We'll return via the more gentle, uphill trail after breakfast on Sunday. Individual commissary. Call leader for meeting time and place and to sign up. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Charlie, 895-3045.

Sunday, July 13 – Bidwell Park Day Hike (grade 2, class A). Take a flat, mostly shady 10-mile trek along the south and north side of Big Chico Creek. We'll meet at Caper Acres Parking Lot at 9:00AM. We'll walk on the paved park road (and maybe

some dirt trail offshoots) past Five Mile to Upper Park (via a dirt road/trail) and end at the golf course. We then return to the Five Mile picnic area for lunch and come back on the north side of the creek to return to the parking lot by 2-3PM. Bring lunch and water. Lunch can also be purchased at the golf course and carried back to Five Mile. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

Wednesday, July 16, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Friday, July 18 – Concert in the Park. A great night of music featuring soul, rhythm and blues with BLUE PARADISE. Meet at 6:30PM at Chico Paper Company corner (4th & Broadway). The concert is from 7PM to 8:30PM. Bring finger food to share, snacks and desserts. Lawn chairs are a good idea. Afterwards possible trip for yogurt or ice cream. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

Saturday, July 19 – Colby Meadows Hike (grade 2, class A). A hike of about 7 total miles in the cross country ski area. We will see seldom visited meadows and springs and may see pileated woodpeckers, northern goshawks and red breasted sapsuckers. Bring boots, lunch, water and \$ for drivers. Round-trip drive of about 75-80 miles. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Sunday, July 20 – Mt. Harkness Peak Hike (grade 2, class B). Climb 8000' Mt. Harkness in Lassen National Park. A 6-mile loop hike with 1800' elevation gain. Panoramic views of Lake Almanor, Mt. Lassen, Mt. Shasta and Juniper Lake. After climbing the peak, we'll return by an alternative route that will take us along the shores of beautiful Juniper Lake. Bring lunch, water, boots, a windbreaker and carpool and park entrance \$\$\$. About a 140-mile roundtrip drive. Call leader in advance to confirm trip. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Sunday, July 20 – Outing Leader's Fall Planning Meeting. Join us as we plan the fall schedule of outings (September, October, and November). Bring a potluck dish to share and your own utensils, we'll provide the drinks. Everyone welcome. Call Alan, 891-8789 for time and meeting place.

Wednesday, July 23, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday-Sunday, July 24-27 – Yosemite National Park Backpack (grade 4, class 3). Enjoy the full summer beauty of the Sunrise and Cathedral Lakes and Long Meadow in Yosemite National Park on this moderate 25-30 mile loop trip beginning at Tenaya Lake and ending at the Cathedral Lake trailhead. One layover day is planned during which we will day hike to the top of Half Dome and possibly Clouds Rest. Expect to see lot's of people. Bear canister required. Individual commissary. Limited to seven participants. Call for reservations. Cost \$5 for permit, plus \$10 per car park entrance fee and carpool \$. Call leader to reserve space and get more information. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Saturday, July 26 - Bumpass Hell to Mill Creek Falls Day Hike (grade B, class 2). Hike approximately 9-10 miles in the heart of Lassen Park to enjoy its most interesting and beautiful features. We'll start with a 1.5 mile hike to Bumpass Hell to view Lassen's hydrothermal area of fumaroles and boiling mud pots. Then we'll continue to Cold Boiling Lake, Crumbaugh Lake and Conard Meadows with ever-changing vistas and a variety of wildflowers. A steep descent then takes us to lovely 75' Mill Creek Falls. We finish with a 2 mile climb to the Southwest campground where we'll lounge at the chalet to await our cars. Car shuttle required. Bring lunch, water and \$ for drivers and park entrance fee. Participation is limited. Call leader to sign up and get meeting time and place. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Bill, 527-8203.

Sunday, July 27 – Indian Spring Trail to Butte Creek (grade 1, class A). Join us for an afternoon hike and swim at the south end of the 1,987-acre Forks of Butte Recreation Area, at its most car-friendly access point off De Sabla Powerhouse Road. You may meet at Chico Park & Ride at 12:30 for self-organized carpooling, then at Paradise Albertson's at 1:00 PM for a short caravan to the trailhead. From the graveled parking area in the canyon we'll lose about 760' in elevation on gentle switchbacks over 1½ miles down to the creek, enjoy the sun and cool water, then return uphill by the same route late in the day. Bring plenty of drinking water and extra footwear for creek exploring (there's a small twin falls just upstream). BLM has found this stretch of Butte Creek eligible for Wild & Scenic status. Rain cancels. Leader: Stephen Sayre, 876-1391 or sayhart@infostations.com.

August

Wednesday, July 30, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Friday-Sunday and Monday-Friday, Aug. 1-3 and Aug. 4-7 – Yahi Group Summer Campout at Manzanita Lake in Lassen Park. Join us at our group site for non-motorized boating, hiking, biking, swimming, fishing, Loomis Museum and amphitheater programs. A store, gas, phones, laundromat and showers available. \$15 per person for each time block. Tent camping at group sites, but recreational vehicles are permitted at the

Outings and Events

regular campsites on a first come, first serve basis at \$16 per night. Outings leaders have hikes planned for every day. Additional park entrance fee is \$10 per car/per week. Car pooling is required as parking is limited. Individual commissary and bring your own camping equipment. To reserve a time block, call leader. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

Wednesday, August 6, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Friday-Monday, August 8-11 – Lassen Park Group Camping at Lost Creek with Shasta Group. Hiking, fishing, swimming, campfire are available at more secluded Lost Creek (5 miles from Manzanita Lake). Tent camping only. Leaders will be available for daily activities such as hiking, boating and group campfires. For more information and to sign up for any or all time blocks, contact leader. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

Saturday, August 9 - Bumpass Hell to Mill Creek Falls Day Hike (grade B, class 2). A repeat of the July 26 hike for those who missed it and for those camping in Lassen Park. Hike approximately 9-10 miles in the heart of Lassen Park to enjoy its most interesting and beautiful features. We'll start with a 1.5 mile hike to Bumpass Hell to view Lassen's hydrothermal area of fumaroles and boiling mud pots. Then we'll continue to Cold Boiling Lake, Crumbaugh Lake and Conard Meadows with ever-changing vistas and a variety of wildflowers. A steep descent then takes us to lovely 75' Mill Creek Falls. We finish with a 2 mile climb to the Southwest campground where we'll lounge at the chalet to await our cars. Car shuttle required. Bring lunch, water and \$ for drivers and park entrance fee. Meet at 8:30AM at the Chico Park & Ride. Leader: Charles: 895-3045.

Wednesday, August 13, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday-Friday, August 14-22 – Kings Canyon/John Muir Wilderness Backpack (grade 5, class D). A week long trip to the majestic eastern end of Kings Canyon National Park. We will drive up to Bishop on Thursday and go in over Piute Pass to serene Humphrey's Basin on Friday, then hike to the John Muir Trail on Saturday. From the JMT we will head south to the pretty Goddard Canyon Trail and then go cross country to Martha Lake. A layover day in the Martha Lake area at 11000-12000 feet will give us an opportunity to climb Mt. Goddard or a nearby peak. From here we will traverse cross-country through the Ionian Basin and over Wanda Pass back to the JMT. After enjoying the lovely meadows and flowers of Evolution Basin and Darwin Bench we will exit over 12900' Lamarck Col. A relatively strenuous trip for experienced backpackers comfortable with cross country travel. Individual Commissary. Cost: \$5 for permit and carpool \$. Limited to six participants. Call to reserve a space. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Friday, August 15 – Concert in the Park. A great night of music featuring old school funk, soul and R & B with DISPHUNKSHUN. Meet at 6:30PM at Chico Paper Company corner (4th & Broadway). The concert is from 7PM to 8:30PM. Bring finger food to share, snacks and desserts. Lawn chairs are a good idea. Afterwards possible trip for yogurt or ice cream. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

Saturday, August 16 – Mt. Lassen Peak Climb (grade 2, class C). Come hike the highest peak in our area. We'll start at 8000' and climb for 2 ½ miles and 2500' to the top of Mt. Lassen. Great views all along the way of Lake Almanor and the eastern part of the park. At the top we'll explore the volcano and enjoy views of Mt. Shasta and the Sacramento Valley. Bring lunch, windbreaker, water, boots and carpool and park entrance fee \$\$\$. Meet at 8AM at the Chico Park & Ride. Leader: Charles, 895-3045.

Wednesday, August 20, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday, August 21 – 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, August 23 – Mountain Bike Ride to Colby Mountain (grade 3, class B). A 15 mile trip with excellent views of Mt. Lassen and the Butte Creek and Deer Creek drainages. Some single track. Bring properly maintained bike, helmet, tube, patch kit, pump, lunch, lots of water, appropriate clothing and \$ for carpool. A round trip drive of 75 miles. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader, Dave, 533-2357.

Saturday, August 23 - Curtain Falls Day Hike (grade 2, class B). A strenuous hike to the designated Wild and Scenic Middle Fork of the Feather River. Three miles of switchbacks and stairs with 1500 feet of elevation loss. Then swim, wade and scramble ½ mile upstream to Curtain Falls. Great scenery and swimming. There is no shade, so bring sunscreen, hat and water, as well as a swimsuit and old tennies or water shoes. Wear boots and bring lunch and snacks in a zip lock bag. Limited to 14 participants. Call leaders for meeting time and place. Return to Chico about 8PM or later. Leader: Doug, 345-0296; Asst. Leader: Dave, 342-4118.

Tuesday, August 26 - Mars Hike (grade 1, class A, educational). Get up close and personal with the fourth rock from the sun. This August, Mars will be closer to the Earth than it has been for the last 60,000 years. By the end of August, it will appear five times larger and fifty-eight times brighter than it did on January 1st of this year. We will celebrate this event by first hiking along the Yahi trail to the diversion dam, where we will enjoy a sack supper, then return to the observatory for a program with the docents, which will include Mars viewing

through their telescope. Bring water, sack supper, binoculars, flashlight and comfortable walking shoes. Meet at Horseshoe Lake Parking Area. Call leader for reservation and departure time. Minimum of 12 required for Observatory Program. Leader: Peggy, 343-9843.

Wednesday, August 27, 7PM – Weekly Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Friday, August 29, 6:30PM - Game Night & Pot Luck. Come join the fun and eat good food under the trees by a sparkling pond. (if it is too hot we can go inside for air conditioning). Bring your favorite game, plate & cup etc and a pot luck dish. We will provide cool drinks. Call for location. Leader: Joanne: 893-2154.

Friday – Sunday, August 29-31 - Backpack in the Trinity Alps, Stonewall Pass to Echo Lake (grade 4, class C). We'll hike 7 miles into the Trinity Alps crossing Stonewall Pass to enjoy the cool enclave of Echo Lake. We'll set up base camp and explore. Excellent vistas, some snow, lots of breathable air. Bring backpacking gear, food for 3 days, 2 nights and \$ for carpooling. Group size is limited. Approximate round trip drive of 300 miles. Return time about 8 P.M. on Sunday. Call for reservations and specifics. Leader: Theresa, 899-7331.

Sunday, August 31 – Dayhike to Green Island & Saucer Lakes (grade 1, class A). From Sunflower Flat at the end of forest road 26N31 we'll hike the easy (about 520' elevation loss & gain) 3-mile trail down to Soda Creek and up to the floating bog at Green Island Lake. We then continue another mile for swimming at deep, beautiful Saucer Lake in the Chips Creek Roadless Area. Meet at Paradise Albertson's at 7:30AM or at the Chico Park & Ride at 8:15AM for the drive up through Butte Meadows, or meet at Cherry Hill campground at about 9:30AM for the 12-mile shuttle over gravel & dirt roads to the trailhead, where the outing begins. Bring lunch, water and swimsuit. Leader: Stephen Sayre, 876-1391 or sayhart@infostations.com.

September

Saturday- Saturday, September 6-13 – Eastern Yosemite Backpack & Circle Around Mt. Lyell (grade 5, class D). Starting from Toulomne Meadows an exploration of the little visited, very scenic country of the North Fork of the San Joaquin River. Starting up Rafferty Creek to Lewis Creek travel into the area south of Mt. Lyell. We then go cross-country over a pass and down enchanting Bench Canyon to Twin Island Lakes. From here north and over another cross-country pass to the John Muir Trail, delight in the vistas from Donohue Pass then head back down to Toulomne Meadows. One layover day is planned. Individual commissary. Cost \$5 for permit, plus \$10 park entrance fee and carpool \$. A relatively strenuous trip for backpackers with experience in cross country travel. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Conservation

Nature Nearby

In the book, *The Boilerplate Rhino*, by David Quammen, the author talks about Henry David Thoreau and his purpose of living in the Walden Pond cabin. He responded to critic Leon Edel who spoke of Thoreau as a sort of "backyard naturalist" and was not qualified to speak of "wilderness" as something that he had experienced and advocated.

Debatably, Thoreau may have erected the cabin at Walden Pond in 1845 partly to get away from an irate Concord community accusing Henry of setting fire to 300 acres of woodland, but his occupational effort may also have been a desperate move to appear as doing something "worthwhile" to appease the expectations of his Concord social circle. Even the inscription in his book stated, *Walden or Life in the Woods by Henry Thoreau Addressed to my Townsmen*. Not only the book but also the two-year experiment in forest dwelling itself was in some sense a gesture directed toward Concord to show that his woodland rambling had a purpose and that he could write a book. Those are psychological analyses that Quammen said really didn't matter in view of Thoreau's inspirational written thoughts in *Walden*.

But Thoreau admitted that he "traveled widely around Concord" without any pretense of being a worldwide "wilderness" explorer. "Solitude is not measured by the miles of space that intervene between a man and his fellows," he argued in *Walden*. "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

Quammen states that *Walden* never was intended to be a book about how to live in the woods, and even though his narrative is sprinkled with loving descriptions of owls, and red squirrels, and thunderstorms, and of the pond itself -- its waters that seemed to shift color according to weather and light, its pickerel, its unusual depth, the intricate patterns of its winter ice -- Walden Pond, a mile from Concord, was no wilderness in the sense of the Maine woods to which he could have gone for his two year hiatus in the out-of-doors.

What is wilderness? Even the definition may have become altered since the days of wild, uncharted America and unknown regions of the world. Perhaps the Wilderness Society should include those aspects of nature nearby in their evaluation of what wilderness includes. Thoreau was not a wilderness explorer in the mode of John Muir who traveled in the most rugged parts of the country...alone, and the furthest that Henry David ventured from the Concord area when young was a couple modest camping trips on local rivers. Yet he coined the phrase, "In Wilderness is the preservation of the World." Did he mean wilderness? It is interesting to note, on April 21, 2003, John Muir's 165th birthday, that he, too,

wrote of wilderness: "In God's wilderness lies the hope of the world -- the great fresh unblighted, unredeemed wilderness." To Muir, though, wilderness and wilderness and nature were, as he said, "hitched together."

According to Thoreau philosophy, wilderness/wildness could be considered the environment in outdoor places near YOUR neighborhood, unless you wish to retain the term to mean remote recesses burrowed away in the mountains or some Amazonian forest, or going into the wilds alone as Alfred Russel Wallace did in search of New Guinea birds of paradise. It was with utmost daring that John Muir ventured into Canadian swamps alone in search of rare orchids, or later going on a thousand-mile journey from Wisconsin to Florida, afoot and alone, in pursuit of botanical wonders. That life-walk proceeded on into California and the Sierras, and although he was alone on many segments of those journeys, he had human neighbors along the way. In fact, he commented that he couldn't exist without people to interact with, but he must have experienced that gut-wrenching aloneness you sometimes feel when totally apart from another human being, dependent on your own resources to find food and shelter. Even Cicero said that to have all the wealth and power in the world and no one to share it with, all would be for naught.

Quammen speaks of this isolation of wilderness when you are alone: "Despite his short trips to Maine, to Cape Cod, to as far afield as Minnesota, Thoreau never seems to have felt that moment of sublime terror that you may have experienced when night falls around an emergency campsite and a person realizes: *I'm alone, I'm on my own. If I break a leg here, I'm finished. If I die right now, no living soul will know where or how it happened -- or even that it happened -- for weeks, maybe months. I might be a pile of bleached bones before they find me. I'm alone.*"

Consider Muir, traveling the Sierras alone for weeks, carrying little more than a sack of bread and tea in a time before helicopters or rescue parties, burrowing into pine boughs at night, and clinging to mountain walls with a fierceness of mountaineering intensity. This "sauntering" was of a different approach than Thoreau, yet each reacted to nature in a similar way, with a love of being in intimate contact with wild things on solitary sojourns.

I am reminded of another true naturalist who loved the story of John Muir, and even visited his birthplace in Dunbar, Scotland, yet was a "city" naturalist -- the first Municipal Park Naturalist in Western America -- but seldom ventured alone into distant woods, or strayed far from his car and equipment. This man was Paul F. Covel, creator, in conjunction with William Penn Mott, of the first Naturalist Program for the City of Oakland in 1948 -- and the forerunner of other naturalist departments in other facilities. Paul would make many forays into nature, but nearly always

accompanied by his wife Marion or son Jim, or with other nature enthusiasts, guiding the way into birds and botany, but never far from a roadway. Paul was a practical naturalist, intent on spreading the interpretation of nature to others, but aware of the limitations, and dangers, of solitary backpack trips, more inclined to point out the existence of miniature nature in sidewalk cracks, or the importance of protecting the environment with an emphasis on conservation.

Naturalist Kurt Rademacher was another brave explorer who, when a young man, made a cross-country journey afoot from California to Florida. But he, too, accepted people's hospitality and an occasional ride to speed up the advancement across barren places. The walker Colin Fletcher did a "thousand mile summer," but just when was he completely isolated for any length of time?

I asked my son Ben, who was in the Peace Corps in Cameroon, Africa, a scientist NASA astronomer given assignments in New Zealand, and who has ventured into Death Valley alone, if he ever had that moment of utmost gut-wrenching feeling of being alone. When he was young, we often made that trip to Death Valley and the Mojave as a family, and in later years he broke away from his own family for a solo trip to Death Valley, climbing some isolated peaks, but he admitted that he was never very far away from public campgrounds, trails, and roads, and never truly had the "wrench" experience. Even when he got lost in the Cameroonian jungles and darkness overtook him, he knew that the road couldn't be far away.

Reviewing my own wanderings, I have never been far from civilization either, nor gone on back-country pack trips alone, preferring to be closer to my equipment and roads and variety. A robust physique helps, too, although John Muir was no giant. The closest I have come to feeling the wrench-clutch was as a boy on the Missouri farm. Those No Creek woodlands were certainly no back-country wilderness, and I regularly hunted the local ravines and hills alone, but one time I remember I had gone farther afield to Fox Den Bluff to fish in the Perch Hole along the creek. In those fear-haunted days of youth, it dawned on me that I was ALONE, and that even my folks might have left me. The dread spreads in your system until the regular enjoyment found in being about on a beautiful day in the woods turns to despair. I climbed the lone cedar tree on the bluff just to see if I could see the car at our farm two miles away and be assured that I hadn't been left behind.

Even when I went with the Contra Costa rock club to the remote Black Rock Desert and hiked one day near camp while the rest of the rock hunters took off in their trucks (equipped with short wave radio), I didn't feel truly alone even though I could see no fellow being while I probed the wastelands. They knew I was about, and if I got lost, they would find me. I felt assured. It's hard to get lost these days, and even Daniel Boone

Overrun

By Rex Burress

Even though I take such delight in the springtime flowers of Table Mountain near Oroville, CA, that I advertise the site through writings, when I saw the hordes of people trampling the flowers on a March Sunday, I was appalled. "How can the flowers survive?" I thought. Were people loving the lovely mountaintop to death? Even though we would be inclined to protect that beautiful landscape from overrun, how can we love the flower land if we don't see it? Is some kind of control needed?

Part of the problem of wildlife preservation is the pressure the expanding population puts on finite resources, and also the abuse and litter many people leave in their wake. When John Muir advised mankind to "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings" in 1885, I'm sure he wasn't anticipating 277 million people visiting National Parks in 2002, nor a million people visiting the Mariposa Grove in Yosemite, when in all the years between 1855 to 1864, only about 650 made the trip. Even the John Muir Trail in the Sierras has become so rutted by foot traffic that sections have been closed and people have been put on a waiting list to obtain wilderness entry permits. Many of those giant Sequoias have been fenced to keep the multitudes from touching them since authorities say that even hugging a tree *en masse* can leave an acid from human hands that can eat away the bark! Now the headlines announce that "Two giant sequoias fall—possibly loved to death." Are we loving nature to death?

The freedom of open space is not the same as when John Muir roamed the Sierras, or when the Lewis and Clark Expedition explored Western America, going where they wished, killing whatever animal they wished, and chopping down whatever tree they wished. That trend was extended into California gold rush days when streams were devastated at will, entire forests cut to build flumes and towns, and watersheds altered by hydraulic mining of the mountains. In a day and age when permits are required for everything, and all land is controlled either by government agencies or private enterprises, and all game hunting has regulations, and all roads have rules, "times they have been a-changin'."

The overrun has become a problem for organizations, especially like the Sierra Club, that seeks new members, encourages outdoor exploration, and plans more and more ambitious outings into the out-of-doors, including flower trips to Table Mountain! One of the main thrusts of the Sierra Club is protection of the environment, and how can this be achieved in the face of a mounting population tromping on the very places they want to protect?

Of course, even the Sierra Club has published some outstanding books depicting the beauty of the out of doors, and produced multitudes of wildlife visual aids, but anyone can tell you there is nothing like the real thing. A book or a video, no matter how well done, is no substitute for the sounds and smells and sights of the living view, so there is a need to have access to outdoor arenas, where mankind can renew visions of the wild and gain solace. It appears

that the waiting list for entrance into wilderness parks and refuges will become longer. Limitation of visitors is about the only answer for all people to have the chance to experience our special parks and at the same time keep them intact. You may have to get on a waiting list to see Yosemite or the Grand Canyon—and those are places every American should visit once in a lifetime...and it MAY BE once in a lifetime. You may have to wait for years to share in that emotional and spiritual experience.

In spite of the reference to the Sierra Mountain Range in the Sierra Club emblem, one of the possible answers to this limited access scenario of major mountain attractions is to experience more nature nearby in local parks -- and even in the street-laced neighborhoods -- where roads and paved paths can provide entrance to an altered habitat that gives a good sample of nature.

Even the most wild regions contain the same essential ingredients of life that is contained in your community -- or even your backyard; things like sky, sunshine, water, flora and fauna. You CAN make a mountain out of a molehill if you consider the wonders of even a simple plot of earth. If you get down into the microscopic world, that vista of nature's building blocks becomes even larger.

There are plenty of trails and paths and outdoor niches -- places that maybe only you know -- where nature-wonders abound. Many of those introduced plants and some hardy natives are more adaptable to the traffic of civilization and allow more intrusion, in spite of California Native Plant Society's objection to French Broom...or the Oroville Tree Division's constant attempt to eradicate the Tree of Heaven along the river levee! Henry David Thoreau spoke of "traveling widely around his town of Concord," rarely venturing beyond walking distance of his home and Walden Pond.

When I was employed on the Naturalist Staff at the City of Oakland, we featured nature walks along the sidewalks that we labeled "Sidewalk Safaris." And cemetery walks! It is amazing how many unique forms of adaptable life you can find growing in a sidewalk crack, and even an un-maintained vacant lot harbors some self-sufficient forms of wildlife. To remain in touch with nature, we need to incorporate these minute tidbits of the wild into our outdoor experiences, and our local parks offer some rich relationships with this mode of discovery until you have that chance to travel to Yellowstone.

Nature Nearby *(continued from p. 8)*

remarked that he never really got lost in the eastern forests, although turned around for a few days a couple times.

Today, there is hardly any place you can go on planet earth without being in contact with

(continued on p. 9)

someone, and there are very few places where some sight or sound of civilization is completely lost. There are high-powered planes and satellites overhead, and Global Positioning instruments you can carry in your hand and will tell you where you are and give you proper maps.

Perhaps we can define wilderness as a condition where wild things are living on their own, and not contain it in a certain remote region.

At the Feather River Nature Center, I met a middle-aged man reorganizing his bicycle backpack gear, having traveled from Redding, CA, and encountering a rainstorm that damaged some of his meager bags. It occurred to me that he was traveling alone, even though on the roads and within reach of help. Nevertheless, he was exercising his individual freedom and locked into being self reliant, perhaps experiencing that gut-wrench when darkness was approaching in a storm as he looked for shelter.

"Traveling far?" I asked.

"Heading for Southern California right now. I'm in no hurry and taking my time, although my bike trailer gave out and I've got to reattach my food bag. Eating enough is a concern as biking requires a lot of energy." He had a few packages of food packed in the front bag, but I looked at that skinny bike and the large sleeping bag pack in amazement that he was voyaging into the unknown with scant material in a move as vivid as the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

As I pulled away in the comfort of my van, moving forth with no more effort than putting my foot on a pedal, encased in steel, I almost felt guilty that a fellow human being was so exposed to the elements. But it was his choice to make that nomadic excursion, just as so many others have chosen the tramp life for whatever reason. On their own in the wilderness of life, moving toward some vague destination, feeling

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The Feather River Land Trust—*(Continued from page 1)*

and, through education, empowerment in shaping community land use decisions. Grants from Foundations have made land purchase and easements feasible. As a registered non-profit charity, the Trust is exempt from State and Federal tax and could be free from local property taxes by filing appropriate disclaimers. However, Hardy is politically savvy in paying local taxes in the spirit of good neighborliness and deflecting suspicion inspired by some realtors and their political allies.

The Trust spent its initial years in an organizational mode and recently obtained office space, a paid staff, and became involved in the nitty-gritty of land procurement, easement monitoring, and land management. The single property that the Trust owns outright is the 600-acre Maddalena Ranch located at the corner of State highway 70 and Plumas County Road A-24 at Beckwourth and extending south into the Sierra Valley wetlands. Presently, the public is informally allowed onto the Maddalena parcel and organized tours and educational field trips are envisioned for the future. Long-range, Hardy foresees reduced intensity of cattle grazing and increased traversing of the property located nearest the Feather River. This allows better access to the contiguous wetlands via a boat launch and enhances bird-watching opportunities. The Sierra Valley is the main north-south flyway for western bird migration, and its spectacular wetlands are a nationally renowned birding destination. An educational program for adults and school children is also being considered.

In partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Sierra Business Council, the Trust assisted in securing a conservation easement on the 13,000-acre "Bar One" ranch property in eastern Sierra Valley on State Highway 49 at the Sierra-Plumas County line. The Trust also partnered with TNC to secure two other easements on another 1,000 acres, in the mountains just south of Sierra Valley. On these properties, access is only allowed by special arrangement.

The concept of land trusts has turned out to provoke a mixture of typically American-flavored responses, positive, and negative. Land trusts are criticized by liberals as a tax scam for the rich, and by libertarian right-wingers as a dodge by environmentalists, to prevent unfettered use of private land. The most vociferous opponents to land conservation are rural county supervisors. In Plumas County, supervisor, realtor, and land developer, B.J. Pearson labels the local land trust "a slap in the face to every person in Plumas County . . . how dare they." He is attempting to use his office to require a County-issued permit, or similar method, to restrict FRLT, especially in his Sierra Valley District.

At the Plumas County Board of Supervisors meeting of April 15, 2003, Board President Pearson initiated "discussion and possible action

regarding Sierra Valley land acquisition." His target is the FRLT. At the meeting, FRLT President Michael Yost presented the Trust's background, mission, and specific management practices. Pearson responded with threats but postponed any concrete proposals until the Board meeting of May 20, 2003. Apparently, Pearson hopes to obtain a Butte County legal filing to the State Attorney General regarding mitigation fees as Butte's method to control land trust expansion in the Upper Sacramento Valley. This could be the template for Pearson's strategy, but he did not respond to my request for further clarification. Pearson's statement regarding a Butte County filing to the AG's office was denied by Butte's County Counsel.

Land conservation disputes between legislators and non-profit private trusts in Butte County parallel another land use conflict in our area. In Susanville (Lassen County), the Rancheria Indian tribe has nearly 900 acres. Tribe spokesperson Valerie Edwards states, "We want to place [our land] in trust to preserve its natural beauty for perpetuity and prevent its use for intensive development." The Susanville City Council wants densely packed tract homes and has appealed the tribe's plan to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, thus indefinitely delaying the tribe's right to place its land into trust.

Land use disputes in Plumas County, around California, and elsewhere in the West, are examples of the widening rift between the people's wishes to protect their property and their elected representatives rushing into the arms of development. The test over how privately-owned agricultural and habitat lands will be developed, or if they will remain open space, is unfortunately getting closer to the courts for legal testing and resolution.

Land trusts usually start out as small, well-intentioned organizations with a few volunteers and an environmentally sensitive board of directors. Small land trusts usually get by with raising funds through developing membership programs. If successful, land trusts must mature toward larger staffs, bigger budgets, and corporate management styles. Those that survive, expand and flourish, eventually succeed at fundraising targeted at the well-heeled private and corporate donors and the government itself. Some trusts have raised needed cash by selling protected land to developers while others have acquired open space with public money through initiating ballot propositions. An egregious case was the infamous realty industry takeover of the Sacramento-based Planning and Conservation League (PCL is the umbrella for a constellation of over 100 environmental organizations) as a lobbying vehicle for their 2002 California Proposition 51. PCL behaved like the real estate tycoons they originally sought to displace. These shady tactics tarnished the environmental credentials of all land trusts, even the very outstanding ones.

There are some questions one should ask before committing to a land trust or, for that matter, to any charity. A few obvious are: Where do I obtain

information about the trust/charity? The simplest way is to ask them directly or check out the trust/charity web site. Corporate information required by State of California filings is available at the California Secretary of State web site: <http://www.ss.ca.gov/business/>. The California Attorney General's Registry of Charitable Trusts web-site accesses IRS 990 financials at <http://caag.state.ca.us/charities/>.

What criteria can I use to decide if I should join, or contribute, to a trust/charity? There are no nationally agreed standards to which you can match a land trust/charity, but general guidelines are available and these should be reviewed prior to commitment to any charitable organization.

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) <http://www.give.org> standards for charitable accountability "assist donors in making sound giving decisions and foster public confidence in charitable organizations. These standards encourage fair and honest solicitation practices, promote ethical conduct by charitable organizations and advance philanthropy."

Organizations that comply with the BBB accountability standards should be able to provide you with documentation on how they perform in the following specific areas:

- how they govern their organization,
- how they spend their money,
- how they verify the truthfulness of their representations,
- they must be willing to disclose basic information about their financial operations,
- they should have a policy promoting pluralism, diversity, and inclusiveness on the organization's board, staff, and constituency, and
- they should maintain an organizational commitment to accountability that places a priority on openness and ethical behavior in all the charity's activities.

The Better Business Bureau's standards are extensive and should also be checked against the Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices to see if the land trust has signed an accountability pledge.

The Land Trust Alliance "Standards and Practices" guidelines, at <http://www.lta.org/resources/standards.html>, were developed to assure the public that a land trust operation is run legally, ethically, and conducts a sound program of land transactions and stewardship. However, it's ultimately up to you if you like the trust's goals and structure, and are comfortable with the answers you obtain. As American land use conflict intensifies, especially with issues pitting rural politicians pushing unbridled development with moral-like certitude, against more intelligent long-range planning demanded by the public, one has a clear opportunity to vote for change with your wallet or accept the bewildering vertigo of the status quo.

[My thanks to Alice Abbott for her expert editorial assistance.]

Conservation

How Worried Should We Be About SODS?

In the past seven years, Sudden Oak Death Syndrome, a deadly canker disease caused by the water mold *Phytophthora ramorum*, has reached epidemic proportions in oak forests along approximately 186 miles of the central California coast.

In the western United States (California and/or Oregon), *Phytophthora ramorum* has been found to infect 23 widely differing plant species: *Acer macrophyllum* - big leaf maple, *Aesculus californica* - buckeye, *Arbutus menzeisii* - madrone, *Arctostaphylos manzanita* - manzanita, *Corylus cornuta* - California hazel, *Heteromeles arbutifolia* - toyon, *Lithocarpus densiflorus* - tanoak, *Lonicera hispidula* - California honeysuckle, *Pittosporum undulatum* - Victorian box, *Pseudotsuga menziesii* - Douglas fir, *Quercus agrifolia* - coast live oak, *Quercus chrysolepis* - canyon live oak, *Quercus kelloggii* - California black oak, *Quercus parvula*, var. *shreveii* - Shreve's oak, *Rhamnus californica* - California coffeebeery, *Rhamnus purshiana* - cascara, *Rhododendron macrophyllum* - rhododendron, *Rubus spectabilis* - salmonberry, *Sequoia sempervirens* - coast redwood, *Toxicodendron diversilobum* - poison oak, *Trientalis latifolia* - western starflower, *Umbellularia californica* - California bay laurel, and *Vaccinium ovatum* - evergreen huckleberry. *Phytophthora ramorum* has also been isolated from the ornamental rhododendron cultivars 'Gomer Water', 'Colonel Coen,' and 'Cunningham's White'.

The plant part infected differs between different species. On the oaks the infection is a deadly canker of the cambium on the main stem. It can also be found on the main stem in tanoak and huckleberry, but on those two species is also found on branches and leaves, where it causes die-back and leaf-tip necrosis. That is how it manifests on most host species, though on honeysuckle, big leaf maple, and bay laurel it has only been found on leaves. Besides the oaks and tanoak, *P. ramorum* is also known to kill madrone and rhododendron; but disease progression and the extent of damage on individual plants of most non-oak hosts is not well characterized at this time.

In redwood trees, the pathogen has been isolated from purple-discolored needles and lesions on the small branches of basal sprouts and saplings at Jack London State Park in Sonoma County and at Henry Cowell SP in Santa Cruz County. Infection in redwood sprouts kills them, while infected redwood saplings usually just grow more slowly.

By the winter of 2002, *Phytophthora ramorum* infections had been confirmed in one southern Oregon county, Curry, and ten California counties, Mendocino, Sonoma, Napa, Solano, Marin, Alameda, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Monterey. As of April 2003 it had also been found in Humboldt and

Contra Costa counties. The largest areas of infestation are in Marin, Santa Cruz, Sonoma, and Monterey counties (see www.apsnet.org/online/feature/sod/). Most confirmations are within 50 miles of the Pacific coast; but since SODS is still a rather new forest disease there is still much to learn about its host preferences and distribution (2001-2002 Survey and Monitoring Program for Sudden Oak Death and *Phytophthora ramorum*). It has been hypothesized that this pathogen thrives in cool and moist environments.

According to UC researchers Garbelotto & Davidson (the main authors of the online article from which much of this information was obtained), *P. ramorum* infection results in two different types of diseases: non-lethal foliar and twig infections, and lethal branch or stem infections.

"Foliar infections play a key role in the epidemiology of *P. ramorum* by serving as a source of inoculum which is then spread aurally through rainsplash. The most likely dispersal propagules of *P. ramorum*, sporangia and chlamydospores, are readily produced on foliage (particularly of *U. californica* and *Rhododendron* spp.), but we have yet to find them on infected oak bark. Therefore, *P. ramorum* epidemics in California oak forests may be driven by the presence and susceptibility of associated plant hosts, not the oaks themselves."

Two recent studies indicate that infection of the foliar host, bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*), precedes the cambial infection of oaks and tanoak. "Hosts with relatively small lesions may be especially important in the transmission biology of *P. ramorum* because such lesions do not kill leaves but can support abundant sporulation for extended periods of time" (Bay Laurel and Native Plants other than Oaks are the Main Hosts for the Sudden Oak Death Pathogen, *P. ramorum*, in California; Garbelotto & Davidson et al, 2003).

Scientists have also found that *P. ramorum* inoculum (sporangia and chlamydospores) accumulate in soil and water, that plant material can become infected when in contact with infested soil and water, and that "infested soil and water are likely to play an important role both in the natural and artificial transmission of this pathogen" (Davidson, Rizzo, and Garbelotto 2002. Phytophthora ramorum and Sudden Oak Death in California: II. Pathogen transmission and survival. Pages 741-749 in: 5th Symposium on California Oak Woodlands, USDA Forest Service, Gen. Tech. PSW-GTR-184).

Other studies show that *P. ramorum* grows best at cool temperatures, 18 - 22 degrees Centigrade (64.4 - 71.6 degrees Fahrenheit), and that 6 to 12 hours of free-standing water on plant surfaces is required for leaf infection. "Studies based on isolations of *P. ramorum* from infested soil (*J. Davidson and P. Maloney, unpublished*

data) indicate pathogen activity starts after repeated precipitation events and peaks during spring months. Dry and warm summer and fall weather result in a sharp decrease, and eventually in a complete arrest, of *P. ramorum* activity in soil" (apsnet.org).

Thus, though it is not yet clear whether the rate of spread of *Phytophthora ramorum* is increasing or decreasing, experiments suggest that sporulation is related to rainfall. Last winter SOD researchers warned that a recurrence of wet, El Nino conditions this spring could promote an increase in the incidence of the disease (SOD Symposium Dec 17-18 2002 Summary). This spring has been a very wet one in California, with the rainy season lasting longer than usual.

Steven Tjosvold, farm advisor in Santa Cruz County (University of California Cooperative Extension, 1432 Freedom Blvd, Watsonville, CA 95076, satjosvold@ucdavis.edu) has found *P. ramorum* on soil collected from hiking trails and hiking boots following several spring rainy periods in a popular California State Park (COMTF August 2002 Report <http://nature.Berkeley.EDU/pipermail/comtf/2002-August/000077.html>).

This suggests that *Phytophthora ramorum* may be able to spread in the same manner as *Phytophthora lateralis*, the causative agent of an exotic root disease that infects the Port Orford cedar in northern California and southern Oregon. Vehicle traffic and roadway drainage there during the wet season has been found to disperse spores of *Phytophthora lateralis*. Transfer of water-borne spores from forest roads into headwater stream crossings can result in the infection and nearly complete mortality of Port Orford cedars along a much larger network of downstream channel margins and floodplains, even deep inside otherwise roadless areas (Zobel et al. 1985; *Ecology, pathology, and management of Port Orford cedar*; General Technical report PNW-184, U.S.F.S., Portland Oregon). Roads can thus greatly increase the spread of pathogens and affect both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems far from the roads.

The apsnet.org article concludes with this warning: "The broad host range of *P. ramorum*, the variability of symptoms among different hosts, and the ability of the pathogen to be aurally dispersed suggests that this pathogen may also have the potential to cause similar, long-term landscape level changes in California forests. Hosts for *P. ramorum* include canopy trees and understory shrubs. The long term consequences regarding mortality for non-oak hosts are unknown at this

time. However, branch dieback on these non-oak hosts may affect leaf and seed production, negatively impact growth and regeneration, and lead to predisposition to attacks by other pathogens and insects. Sub-lethal infections of non-oak hosts may also allow *P. ramorum* to

Last Words

How Worried Should We Be About SODS? *(continued from p. 11)*

persist indefinitely in infested forests and affect the success of future regeneration and restoration efforts.”

“It is unclear at this time what the long-term consequences will be for harvesting and

(continued on p. 12)

regeneration of *S. sempervirens* (redwood) and *P. menziesii* (Douglas fir). However, the observation of *P. ramorum* in the xylem of a large *S. sempervirens*, the results of the inoculation studies for both conifers, and the detection of *P. ramorum* in dying sprouts and branches suggests that the situation requires more extensive research.”

Aerial surveys will not suffice to determine likely infection sites, since trees that are infected and even bleeding often still produce apparently healthy foliage more than two years later (McPherson, et al. 2002; Progression of Sudden

Oak Death Over Two Years at Sites in Marin County, California; SOD Science Symposium).

Regulations currently in place to prevent the spread of *P. ramorum* focus on regulating greenwaste disposal, firewood sale and distribution, biomass and landfill facilities, utility line clearing, and survey and inspection for nurseries to prevent the movement of infected materials from infested counties to any uninfested area. Both intrastate and interstate quarantines are enforced by the County Agricultural Commissioners.

All agricultural operations are regulated by the local Agricultural Commissioner for all activities except commercial timber harvesting. Commercial timber harvesting on public and private forest lands is regulated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. On federal lands, the enforcer is the agency responsible for land management. More information about SODS can

Winning Sprawl Battles: New Free Book for Download

A new book, [How To Win Land Development Issues](http://www.ceds.org/publications.html), has just been posted on the CEDS website <http://www.ceds.org/publications.html> and can be downloaded free. I wrote this book for citizens fighting sprawl and other poorly conceived forms of growth.

This 107-page book is a comprehensive citizen's guide for resolving concerns about sprawl, highways, commercial and residential projects, landfills, and a number of other development types. The book emphasizes a win-win approach utilizing Smart Growth principles. It begins with the Easy Solution then describes how to mobilize public support if more aggressive action is needed. The book explains how to identify and solve development impacts related to: air quality, aquatic resources, crime, environmental justice, historic resources, noise, odor, open space, property value, schools, traffic, visual impacts and wildlife.

The growth management process is described along with how citizens can utilize the process to resolve concerns. A detailed description is provided of the following strategy options for winning land development campaigns: negotiating with the applicant, working with regulatory staff, lobbying key decision-makers, legal action, changing the law, and land preservation.

In addition to this book many other publications are available free for download from the CEDS website <http://www.ceds.org/publications.html>. Our advice is also available free by phone to citizens. Just call 800-773-4571.

Richard D. Klein, President

Community & Environmental Defense Services,
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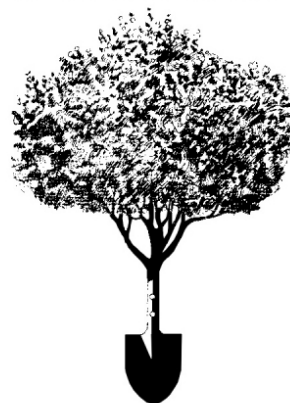


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