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Yahi
Group

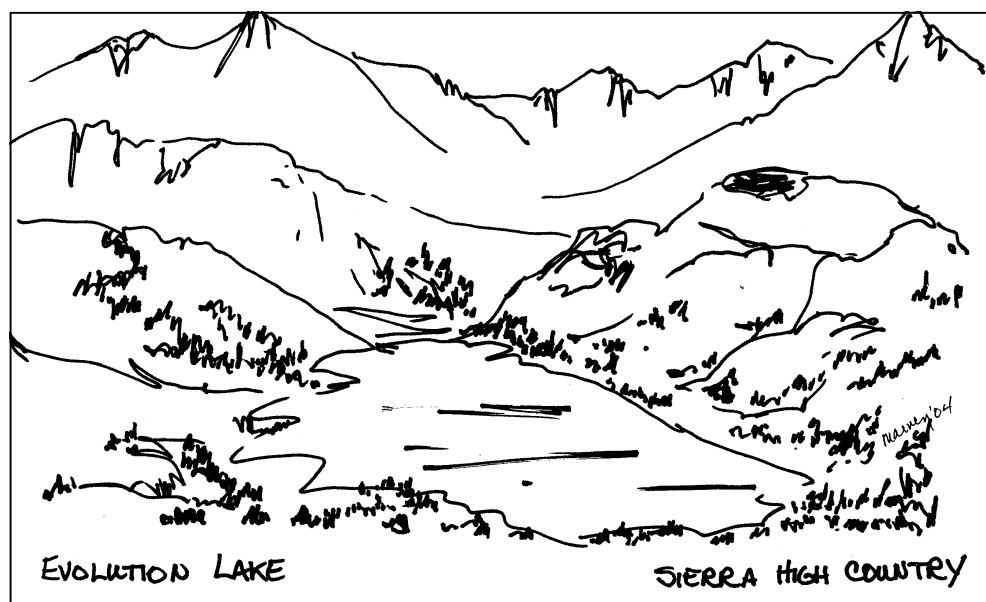


Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

News Articles Programs Hikes and Outings Meetings Events

At Last—The Possibility of a Sierra Conservancy

By Marvey Mueller



Ink Drawing by Marvey Mueller

Over the years I have hiked miles and miles of Sierra high country, loving every step of my journey into its rugged wilderness. And every year I wonder how much longer will these mountains of remarkable beauty be safe from encroaching development, global warming, declining habitats and species, and general overuse from our growing population. My first ray of hope came just a few weeks ago when I learned that one of the hottest conservation bills this decade is right now being hammered out in the hallowed halls of the State Legislature.

AB 2600, proposed by Assemblyman John Laird of Santa Cruz, will create a **Sierra Nevada Conservancy**, a State Agency that will promote protection of the natural and cultural resources of the Sierra Nevada. Laird, an environmentally knowledgeable legislator who chairs both the Assembly Select Committee on California Water Needs and the Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee, has brought this bill forward with key efforts from the Sierra Fund and the Save the Mono Lake Committee.

And what is a Conservancy? It is a non-regulatory (no new regulations, hooray!) agency created to protect and preserve resources within a specific region with specific characteristics. Conservancies are independent organizations

housed inside of the California Resources Agency. They work in partnership with landowners, local, state and federal governmental agencies and nonprofits. Conservancy Boards disperse state monies for projects within their region that meet the goals of the Conservancy. The Sierra Conservancy will appropriate the \$30 million in bond money for the Sierras adopted as part of Proposition 50.

There are currently eight conservancies in the State of California that protect areas considered of crucial, statewide importance. Their sizes and governance structures vary. Probably the best known is the California Coastal Conservancy. Established in 1976 it has undertaken more than 950 conservation, restoration and enhancement projects along California's 1,100 mile coastline.

The Tahoe Conservancy, established in 1984 to "keep Lake Tahoe blue" has worked hard with public agencies and local governments to improve and sustain high water quality in the lake while preserving wildlife habitats, restoring shorelines and still providing public access.

With the pressing need for an integrated strategy to protect the resources of the Sierra Nevada, a Sierra Conservancy is long over due. The Sierra Nevada Range is California's last great reservoir for clean water, blue oak woodland, working ranches, wilderness and recreation. 400 miles of the Sierra Nevada mountain range, which covers 31% of the state, provides more than 65%

of California's drinking water and almost 100% of Northern Nevada's. Already 23 of 24 Sierra watersheds have impaired water quality.*

In addition to water, the range delivers 1/3 to 1/2 of California's timber supply. It supports 1/2 of all plants found in California, 2/3 of the bird and mammal species and 1/2 of reptile and amphibian species. It also ranks number one among the world's ecological regions in the number of endemic aquatic invertebrates.*

And they are not the only animals that use these mountains. There are 212 human settlements in the Sierra Nevada and the tourists who hike its trails, fish its streams, row its rivers and ski its slopes number into the many millions. Some of our oldest and most favorite National and State Parks are in the Sierra Nevada.*

Thankfully, there is general agreement in the Legislature that the time for a Sierra Conservancy is right. But opinions differ on how much land, how much governance and how much control the conservancy should have. Assemblyman Tim Leslie of Tahoe City has introduced a second bill, AB 1788, also proposing a Conservancy but with some important differences. Both bills acknowledge the Sierra as a State source of water, recreation, tourism and timber.

The difference in scope of coverage by the two bills is of great importance to us in the North Valley. While Laird includes the Cascade Ranges in AB 2600, Leslie does not. Leslie wants to limit the jurisdiction to the core of the Sierra only. This would leave the Cascades, which includes Lassen, without any protection. Laird's bill would also bring the boundary down into the foothills to protect the Blue Oak Woodlands; Leslie would

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Chat and Chew

Let's Build on our First Annual Chat and Chew -- with your help! We had a grand first annual Chat and Chew in the lovely garden of Joanne Gerson on May 16. More than fifty people enjoyed sharing their environmental concerns and questions -- while getting to learn more about the different conservation-related projects going on in Butte County and nearby areas. We hope to see more people become involved in conservation activism with the Yahi Group of the Sierra Club and with the other environmental groups which were present. We also hope that, with the help of volunteers, we can build our email, web, and other personal contacts to keep ourselves informed about important local environmental news and events.

About This Newsletter

SIERRA CLUB YAHİ GROUP NEWSLETTER is published quarterly in March, June, September and December by the Yahi Group of the Sierra Club, Post Office Box 2012, Chico, CA 95927 or 5590 Feather River Place, Paradise, CA 95969, Attn: Louise Casey.

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

Submission Guidelines:

Please include name, phone, and address with each submittal. Short, single topic articles are preferred. Deadlines for proposed articles and letters to the editor: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1. A one week extension is available if the submission is sent by e-mail and advance advisory has been provided that the article is forthcoming. Submissions will be returned if specifically requested and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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

A special note was made of the tremendous efforts made by Coleen Jarvis, Councilperson and activist extraordinaire, who has accomplished so much to help preserve so much of the natural beauty in and around Chico. We fully realized that this event could not have come to pass without the love of nature, labor, monetary donations, and sheer work of very many people.

Thanks go, first of all, to Joanne Gerson, the provider of the Chat and Chew garden setting, and to the project representatives.

The Sierra Club is very grateful to Tin Roof Bakery and Miller Bakery for all the wonderful bread we most enjoyably ate. (Most of the leftover bread went to the Esplanade House.) We thank Safeway, for its donation covered \$40 worth of needed food supplies. The volunteers who represented a large variety of environmental groups active in Butte County and nearby areas included: Jackson Shed of the **Altacal Audubon Society**; Chico State students representing **Associated Students Recycling**; Suellen Rowilson of the **California Native Plant Society**; Hilary Locke and Jerry Olio of the Sierra Club-Yahi Group's own **Bidwell Ranch Project**; Barbara Vlamis from the **Butte Environmental Council**; Rich Reiner from the **Nature Conservancy**; Stacey Joliffe and Randy Abbott from the **Friends of Bidwell Park**; John Merz from the **Sacramento River Preservation Trust**; and all the good souls asking petitions be signed to keep Butte County free of genetically modified foods and to build a needed bicycle bridge in Chico.

There were many other volunteers, mostly Sierra Club officers or other members, who contributed everything from food, to publicity, to signs, to running around town with flyers and signs, to furnishing 10 tables and chairs for all, to salads, fruit, and nuts, to helping to set up, and take down, and to welcoming visitors. These volunteers included several of the project representatives and guests as well as: Alan & Joy Mendoza, Barbara Todd, Carla Moreno and Gene, David Nopel, Gerda Lydon, Goodie Sweatt, Janice Heckerson, Joanne Gerson, Julian Zener, Linda Stuke, Louise Casey, Marvey & Charles Mueller, Mary and Jim Johnson, Ron Hirschbein, Susan Mason, Thelda Eli, Wendy and John Woods.

Extra-special thanks go to those volunteers whose names I did not list here and to the wonderful guests without whose interest in conservation efforts we could not hope to accomplish our environmental goals.

--Grace Maria Marvin, Co-Chair
Sierra Club, Yahi Group

**Welcome to Marvey Mueller—Yahi Group's
new Conservation Chair!**

Yahi Group of the Sierra Club

Elected Officials

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GMRADM@aol.com

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JaneHeck@cs.com

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Wendy Woods: 530-899-8607
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Trish Puterbaugh
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Membership

Gerda Lydon: 530-343-9277

Yahi Group Second Annual Garden Tour

by Theresa Marcis

On May 15, I oohed and aahed through the seven local gardens that made up the Sierra Club's 2nd Annual Garden Tour. It's probably not a stretch to say most of us were dazzled by the maturing, evolving gardens in crescendo.

It's probably not a stretch to say we were also soothed by the distinctive ecologies, the love of land and place obvious. I should know: I eavesdropped like mad.

The gardens, including the non-profit Little Red Hen (lush in social vision and donated plants) were shaped by a deeply refreshing land ethic. The Circle of Nations Peace Garden showed this beautifully. Visitors were encouraged to walk silently, reverently in the midst of prayerful totems--poles tied with squares of colored cloth evoking the four directions, multi-culture, earth elements. I moved through feeling the sun, seeing corn leaf through soil, seeing cactus as a dance of thorn and moist green flesh.

Nearby, "Chico Heaven," the garden of Mark Hooper and Christy Santos, showed what "literally tons of manure and compost" can do over nearly thirty years. One center is a St. Francis bird bath that steadies fuchsias, fox gloves, acanthus. The purples and glossy magentas give way to the astonishingly colorful and overflowing collection throughout of established edibles, perennials, natives, exotics: tall thickening oaks, surging black pansies. One viewer said it squarely: "You could come back here every day for a month and still see something new."

In west Chico, Emilie and Ken White's garden claims pesticide-free living and shapes native focal points, like the far-spreading red bed in the front garden. Too, Emilie had long listed the plant and bird life, but the personal touched me immediately. Hand-made stepping stones (pruners and spades pressed into cement), a frequent-flyer patch for winged gardeners on the go. And, a shin-level altar of tall deep green bottles in front of a round mirror caught my breath.

Some gardeners offered resonant principles. In north Chico, Jay Rawlins, whose start in gardening began through gardener mentors who offered what grew from home, spoke to the benefits of giving and receiving: "Never pay money for plants if you can help it."

In a northeast small-space garden, on what had originally been meadowland, Chris Perske pointed to plants that have survived the refiguring. Soap plant, remarkable for its shoulder-reaching stretch, thrive as do the natives that makes their garden homey. The front garden boasts the only oak (planted eight years ago) on Silver Oak Drive.

In central Chico too, the spirit of reclamation swells. Joanne Gerson's freshest-looking-pond-I've-ever-seen protected by taller shade trees threaded with Tibetan prayer flags emerged from a "jungle filled with ailanthus, blackberries, weeds, and appliances. There, gardeners of all kinds rested and wandered in the cooled air, drawn to the moving water, the



Buddah Statue in the gardens of Joanne Gerson.

peace of it.

As the tour closed I was sure of one thing. I, and the soft-sole crowd of us, flourished within these blossoming spaces. When people who are interested in gardens come for a look at gardens, something "grass-roots" expands. The intimacy is contagious.

Note from Joanne Gerson:

Think about your place or a friend or neighbors for next year's garden. It is very rewarding to hear all the oohs and awes and "how do you dos". At the same time you see old friends and make new ones.

Big Voter Turnout for Sierra Club Elections

Lawrence Downing, Groundswell Sierra

In an election that featured a robust debate and a vastly higher voter turnout than any previous Sierra Club contest, candidates Aumen, Karpf, O'Connell, Ranchod, and Renstrom were all elected to the Board of Directors.

These candidates were endorsed by Groundswell Sierra and were among the eight selected following an extensive Nominating Committee process.

The Sierra Club membership's unprecedented response to the outside takeover effort and the added energy of more than 100,000 new voters participating in the process are already sparking calls for reforming the Club's election rules so they better serve this new era that will continue to involve a very large and vibrantly democratic membership base. Clearly, the post election period provides a great opportunity to assess our practices and

Newsletter Thanks

by Susan Sears & Louise Casey

The editors of the Yahi Newsletter wish to extend a special thanks to three people who are key in getting the newsletter to you each quarter: **Dave Nopel, Jon Hilbert and Gerda Lydon.**

Once every four months, Jon Hilbert takes the newsletter master to the office of the *Gridley Herald*, prepares it for copying, then carries 3000 completed newsletters to Gerda Lydon's. Gerda hosts the gathering to get the newsletter ready for mailing. Dave Nopel is the person who gets the mailing labels for the newsletters from San Francisco, brings them to Gerda's house and, along with anyone else who wants to join in, helps affix them to the printed newsletters.

This quarterly mailing "party" is a wonderful way for new Sierra Club members to get a chance to meet other members and just chat, since it's not a formal meeting. As Gerda says, "The more the

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

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



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Getting Involved

Possibility of a Sierra Conservancy - *con't from p. 1*

not. This may be a major area of contention as the foothills are the most populated area of the Sierra.

(Continued on p. 4)

Without inclusion in the Conservancy, abuse and overuse in populated areas could easily continue.

Another issue to be decided is the size of the Board. Laird calls for a seven-member board, which is the same as in the Coastal Conservancy. Laird's board members would have state-wide perspectives. Leslie wants to expand that to 26 members, which would include county supervisors from the region. Sounds unwieldy and possibly provincial to me.

These and other issues have still to be resolved as both bills move forward in the Assembly. Our Sacramento Office of the Sierra Club statewide is following both bills closely. Until there is a finished product we still have time to give our input. I would urge you to call your State legislator with your own views. Let's save our beautiful Sierra Nevada before it's too late! Thumbs up for a Sierra Conservancy!

What's Your

You may have heard of the concept of the ecological footprint. Depending on how each of us lives, it's the amount of acreage needed on the earth to support our lifestyle. The average person in the U.S. uses about 24 acres, one of the largest ecological footprints in the world. Germans have an ecological footprint of 13 acres, while countries like India have an ecological footprint of 2.

If you want to calculate what yours is, go to this website: www.myfootprint.org

You may have to wait a minute for the page to fully download with the names of

Great Fun and Good Food at the Faire

Yahi volunteers at the May 1, 2004, *Endangered Species Faire* communicated a great deal about the Sierra Club and had a lot of fun in the process. Hundreds of people stopped by and chatted with us. Part of the evidence for that number comes from the nearly 130 signatures we obtained on a Bidwell Ranch petition. Hilary Locke from the Yahi's Bidwell Ranch Project gave us a wonderful, huge photograph that showed the ranch and its relationship to Upper Bidwell Park. We were able to clearly show why we need to be vigilant in making sure that the city does not sell the property. The photograph was a terrific drawing card for people to ask about our efforts.

The Yahi volunteers talked about our outings, our May 15 Garden Tour, and our May 16 Chat and Chew, which we hope will further inspire members and other guests to consider how the Yahis can be engaged in more conservation activism. We also gave out Yahi newsletters, membership sign-up information, Sierra Club buttons, national outings information, and "The Planet," a national Sierra Club newspaper for environmental activists.

We had a special small table for children with a variety of nature relevant playthings. We also raised \$69 by selling Sierra Club goodies, such as t-shirts, cards, and trail books. Special thanks go to Louise Casey for the wonderful, very professional looking signs and to Dave Nopel, who made terrific posts for them. Thanks also go to volunteers who helped my husband (Julian Zener) and me tabling: Carol Dutcher, Wendy and Rich Rosecrance, Jerry Olio, and Joanne Gerson.. We look forward to other volunteers helping to put together and "working" the booth in future years.

We are very grateful that the Butte

California Redbook Online

If you're not using this item, you're probably not having fun yet! Go to the link below and put it in your Favorites. In addition to contact info for activists all over the state, it includes contact info for other environmental organizations, plus the beloved bylaws and standing rules and such!

<http://sccredbook.org/zierold87.html>

Bidwell Cleanup

by Susan Mason

Help remove invasive plants from Bidwell Park

Friends of Bidwell Park volunteers are currently removing Japanese privets from the Five Mile Recreation Area. Over the years, much of this area has become a monoculture of privet, severely reducing regeneration of plants that are more beneficial to the area's wildlife. Recently, the Chico Park Department cut down the large seed-producing privet trees in this area, and volunteers are removing the tens of thousands of smaller privet shrubs and trees.

We meet every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday between 9 am and 1 pm. Come any time and help for a couple of hours. FOBP supplies tools, gloves and water. For directions to the site, more information about the work or other weeding dates, email info@friendsofbidwellpark.org or call Susan Mason at 892-1666. Volunteer opportunities in the park and elsewhere are posted in the calendar on our web site www.friendsofbidwellpark.org.

Help make Upper Park more friendly to wildlife

Friends of Bidwell Park volunteers have started mapping the locations of the many old woven and barbed wire fences in Upper Park. These fences are a danger to the area's wildlife and, in some cases, to human park users. Once the fences are mapped, we'll be able to start removing them. You can read more about this project at www.friendsofbidwellpark.org/barbedwire.html


If you hike or ride in Upper Park, please take the time to let us know where you've seen fences. We can provide you with detailed maps of the area to help you pinpoint fence locations.

Also, the barbed wire fence between the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve and Upper Park needs to be made more wildlife-friendly. Dr. Paul Maslin has offered to work with a volunteer to raise the fence along wildlife corridors. Here's a chance to spend time with one of the area's foremost environmental experts, see new territory, and help the park.



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Sierra Club Cruises to Channel Islands

The Sierra Club California Political Committee is offering two cruises to Channel Islands National Park and Marine Sanctuary.

Channel Islands National Park and Marine Sanctuary: September 16-19, 2004

A 4-day fundraising cruise will leave from Santa Barbara on September 16, returning September 19, visiting San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz and Anacapa Islands, traveling on the 68-foot twin diesel *Truth*.

All islands are unique -- rugged mountains, deep canyons, steep cliffs, and isolated sea caves are home to a plethora of sea life and birds. Each island has its own special charm: San Miguel for its white, sandy beaches and numerous elephant seals; Santa Rosa for its rare Torrey Pine forest; Santa Cruz for high mountains and Painted Cave, the world's largest; Anacapa, for the west coast brown pelican rookery, steep cliffs, a picturesque lighthouse, its colony of friendly sea lions, and excellent snorkeling waters.

A ranger/naturalist will travel with us to identify dolphins and whales, sea lions and seals, and numerous species of birds. Guided hikes will be conducted on all islands. Other activities will include kayaking, snorkeling, beachcombing, or just relaxing at sea. Photographers -- don't miss the "magic hours" at sea among the islands of our newest and most beguiling national park.

The cruise is strictly informal. Each guest will be assigned a bunk with a reading light and privacy curtains. The cost, \$625, includes bunk space, sumptuous meals and snacks, and guided tours.

Channel Islands National Park and Marine Sanctuary Pinniped Cruise, February 5-6, 2005

The destination for this weekend fundraising cruise will be San Miguel Island, where thousands of seals and sea lions gather during the winter months. A ranger/naturalist will travel with us to lead hikes and to point out whales and dolphins, seals and sea lions, as well as numerous species of birds. Kayakers welcome. Guests will board the 65-foot twin diesel *Truth* on Friday, February 4, for early Saturday departure.

The cost, \$350, includes the same amenities as listed for the September cruise.

Proceeds from these events will support Sierra Club-endorsed candidates running for office in California.

To reserve space on either cruise, send a \$100

Pacific Crest Trail Cleanup

It's not often you get an adventure and a back country service trip all in one but we have one for you. Beginning Wednesday July 21 through Sunday, July 25 we will be clearing downed trees, cutting brush and restoring tread to 10 - 15 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail where it traverses the Bucks Lake Wilderness in the Plumas National Forest. Because it is part of the Wilderness there are no power tools allowed, so cutting trees will be done the old fashioned way - two person cross cut saws and axes.

We will camp at Three Lakes which has limited access over 4 wheel drive road so the Backcountry Horsemen's Association will help with moving food and equipment. Can you join us for the adventure? The fun? The food? The work... A \$25.00 refundable deposit holds your spot. Food and tools are supplied by the National Forest and the Pacific Crest Trail Association. To sign up and for more information call Larry Krum at 408-270-4513 or Alan Mendoza at 530-891-8789.

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.

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

Yahi Group Summer 2004

On-Going: Tuesday Power Walks. (grade 2, class A). Meet at Chico Park & Ride each Tuesday evening at 7PM for a 1 1/2 hour brisk walk along the creek. Wear tennies/walking shoes and bring water. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980, Asst. Leader: John, 872-8258.

June 2004

Tuesday, June 1, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Saturday, June 5 – Colby Meadows Hike (grade 2, class A). Celebrate National Trails Day with 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.

Saturday, June 5 – Help Maintain Trails in Upper Bidwell Park. Suitable for all ages and a good way to learn more about the trails in the Park. Gloves, tools, training and beverages are provided by the Parks Department. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. For more information, contact Steve Hogue at the Parks Department, 895-4758 or shogue@ci.chico.ca.us

Sunday, June 6 – Dog and Dog Lovers Hike & Swim (grade 1, class A). Beat the heat with an early morning hike and swim in Upper Bidwell Park. Bring leash, water, treats, and proof of rabies vaccination for dog; water, snacks, swimwear and towel for you. Meet at Horseshoe Lake parking lot in Upper Bidwell at 7AM. Space limited to 6 obedient, people-friendly and dog-friendly dogs. If hiking with a dog, call leader for reservations. Leader: Peggy, 343-9843; Asst. Leader: Bill, 527-8203.

Tuesday, June 8, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Tuesday, June 15, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Saturday-Sunday, June 19-20 – 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 gentler, 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: Julian, 893-1994.

Tuesday, June 22, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Saturday, June 26 – Three Lakes Pacific Crest Trail Hike (grade 4, class D). Let's get in shape for the summer with a very strenuous 15 mile hike up the Pacific Crest Trail from Belden to the Three Lakes area with a 4000' elevation gain through the forest in the first 4 miles. Nice views when we get to the top of the Feather River Canyon and Bucks Lake Wilderness. Bring lots of food, water, sunscreen, comfortable footwear and carpool \$. Leader will have water filter. About an 85-mile round-trip drive. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 7:30AM or Spring Valley School (just north of Hwy 70 on Pentz Rd) at 8AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Sunday, June 27 - Bike Ride to Chico Airport (grade 2, class A) Meet at 11:00 AM by USPS mailboxes on Pillsbury Rd in parking lot in front of Mervyn's, across from Round Table Pizza. We'll take nearby bike path to Chico Airport and watch planes take off and land while eating our lunch. Round trip ride of 7 miles. Bring water and lunch. Helmet required. Leader Carla, 891-6977, Asst. Leader, Gene, 873-1552.

Tuesday, June 29, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday-Monday, July 1-5 Yosemite National Park Backpack (grade 4, class B). An easy, 14-15 mile loop backpack along the north rim of Yosemite Valley from Yosemite Creek to Porcupine Flats. On the way we'll visit the top of El Capitan, Eagle Peak, Yosemite Falls and North Dome and maybe hike down to Yosemite Valley. Individual commissary. Bear canister required (or you can rent one there). Group size limited to eight participants. Leader has extra backpacks, sleeping bags, tents and other backpacking equipment to share. Call to make reservations. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

July 2004

Friday, July 2 – Concert in the Park. A great night of music featuring the Chico Community Band (6:30-7:30) and Bawl N' Chain (7:45-8:30). Meet at 6PM at Chico Paper Company corner of 4th & Broadway. Bring finger food snacks to share. Lawn chair a good idea. Possible trip for yogurt or ice cream afterwards. Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

Saturday, July 3 – Help Maintain Trails in Upper Bidwell Park. Suitable for all ages and a good way to learn more about the trails in the Park. Gloves, tools, training and beverages are provided by the Parks Department. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. For more information, contact Steve Hogue at the Parks Department, 895-4758 or shogue@ci.chico.ca.us

Tuesday, July 6, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Friday-Sunday, July 9-11 – Juniper Lake/Lassen National Park Car Camp. Spend a relaxing summer weekend away from the valley heat at cool 7000' Juniper Lake. The Yahi Group has reserved a group campsite for two nights close to the lake. Individual commissary. Optional hikes are planned to Inspiration Point, the top of Mt. Harkness and Snag and Horseshoe Lakes. Cost: \$15 per person and park entrance fee of \$10. Call leaders to make reservation and to get more info on costs and carpooling. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

Tuesday, July 13, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Saturday, July 17 – Butt Mountain/Carter Meadow Hike (grade 2, class B). A round-trip hike of 9 miles mostly on the PCT to reach the 7900' summit of Butt Mountain. Along the way we'll have tremendous views to the west and south of Lake Almanor. At the top we'll get a 360 degree view, including Lassen Peak. After the hike we can cool ourselves off in the refreshing waters of Carter Meadows. For those who want to stay a bit longer we will have a BBQ and pot luck in Carter Meadows. Bring sunscreen, lunch, plenty of water, a pot luck dish (optional) and \$ for gas. About a 90-100 mile round-trip drive. Please phone leader in advance. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Leader: John, 872-8258.

Sunday, July 18 - Bumpass Hell to Kings Creek Falls Day Hike (grade B, class 2). A drop dead gorgeous spring hike to the Bumpass Hell thermal area along a ridge filled with wildflowers. We then pass interesting Cold Boiling Lake and on to pretty Kings Creek Falls and back to Kings Creek Meadow. This will be a shuttle hike of 8 miles. Wear layers and sturdy boots (there are slippery rock stretches along the creek). Bring lunch, water, binoculars, lightweight field guide, camera and \$ for drivers and park entrance fee. Round-trip drive of 135 miles—carpool cost will be approximately \$8. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or in Red Bluff at 9AM. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Bill, 527-8203.

Tuesday, July 20, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Sunday, July 25 – 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

Outings and Events

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; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

Sunday, July 25 – Yahi Group Fall Outings Planning Meeting and Pot-Luck. Join us as we plan our fall outings for September, October and November. Everyone interested in outings is welcome. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Tuesday, July 27, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Friday, July 30 – Once in a Blue Moon Hike (grade 1, class B). At the end of July a blue moon will shine above Chico. Join us for an evening hike and picnic along the North Run to view the setting sun and rising moon. Following the hike, we'll stop by the observatory to view the moon and stars through the telescopes. Bring light jacket, water, supper, flashlight and binoculars. Meet at Horseshoe Lake at 7PM. Leader: Peggy, 343-9843, Asst. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

Saturday-Sunday July 31-Aug. 1 – Mt. Eddy Climb and Car Camp (grade 1, class B). Climb 9025' Mt. Eddy, the highest peak in the Klamath Mountains. The beautiful 9-10 mile round-trip trail in the proposed Mt. Eddy Wilderness Area climbs 2800' and passes Deadfall Lakes, several streams and verdant alpine meadows and wildflower displays. At the top enjoy an incredible close up view of Mt. Shasta to the east and the Trinity Alps to the west. After our late afternoon climb we will camp overnight and do a short hike on Sunday to a nearby lake before driving home. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789; Asst. Leader: Bill, 527-8203.

August 2004

Tuesday, August 3, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Friday-Sunday, August 6-8 – Yahi & Shasta Groups Summer Campout at Manzanita Lake in Lassen Park. Join us at our group site for non-motorized boating, hiking, biking, swimming, and fishing, Loomis Museum and amphitheater programs. A store, gas, phones, laundromat and showers available. Cost: Non-refundable \$15 per person payable in advance plus car entrance fee. Tent camping at group site. Outings leaders have hikes planned for every day. Car pooling is required as parking is limited. Individual commissary, but we'll have a potluck dinner Friday night. Bring your own camping equipment. Limited to 20 campers. Call leader for more information and to sign up. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Julian, 893-1994.

Saturday, August 7 – Help Maintain Trails in

Upper Bidwell Park. Suitable for all ages and a good way to learn more about the trails in the Park. Gloves, tools, training and beverages are provided by the Parks Department. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. For more information, contact Steve Hogue at the Parks Department, 895-4758 or shogue@ci.chico.ca.us

Tuesday, August 10, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Saturday, August 14 – Sacramento River Loop Bike Ride (grade 2, class A). A flat, leisurely 15 mile round trip past cool, shady orchards along Sacramento Avenue to the river and return to Chico on River Road. Bring lunch and water. Helmet required. Meet behind "Windy's Chinese Restaurant", 1000 W. Sacramento Avenue at 10AM. Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

Tuesday, August 17, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday, August 19 – 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.

Friday, August 20 – Concert in the Park. California Celtic music with Betain (7:00-8:30PM). Meet at 6:30PM at Chico Paper Company corner of 4th & Broadway. Bring finger food snacks to share. Lawn chairs recommended. Possible trip to yogurt or ice cream afterwards. Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

Saturday, August 21- Curtain Falls Gorge Scramble (grade 2, class B). Hike down the Bald Rock Dome Trail to the Wild and Scenic Middle Fork Feather River (about 1500 ft. elevation loss on a well-engineered trail.) Then wade, swim and scramble 1/2 mile upstream to Curtain Falls. Spectacular scenery, great swimming and optional water slide. Some poison oak, rough surfaces and no shade. Wear boots and bring watershoes, sun protection, swim suit, lunch and snacks (in zip lock bags), water and carpool \$. Strenuous hiking, scrambling and swimming. Return time to Chico 8:00PM. Limited to 15 participants. Call leaders for meeting time and place. Leaders: Doug, 345-0296 and Dave, 342-4118.

Monday-Saturday, Aug. 23-28 – Ansel Adams Wilderness Backpack (grade 3, class D). A moderately strenuous extended in and out backpack starting from Silver Lake on the Rush Creek trail in the Eastern Sierras north of Mammoth. We then head to the scenic Marie Lakes and go over a cross country pass into the beautiful Twin Island/Lake Basin area where we'll base camp. Limited space. Individual commissary. Call leader to reserve spot and get more info. Leader: Alan, 530-891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net. Asst. Leader: Karl, 530-274-9477.

Tuesday, August 24, 7PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday, May 27 – 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, more info.

Saturday, August 28 – Turner Mountain Hike (grade 2, class B). A pretty climb of 5-6 miles and about 2000' in the Lassen National Forest south of Mineral to the top of 6900' Turner Mountain. The trail winds through cool forest and then opens up in the last 1/4 mile to 360° views of the surrounding area, including Lake Almanor, Butt Mountain, Mount Lassen and Brokeoff Mountain. Bring lunch, water, hiking boots, sunscreen, a hat and carpool \$\$\$. Round-trip drive of about 140 miles. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:00AM. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Sunday, August 29 – 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; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

Sierra Club Hike Classifications

Distance Rating

Grade 1: up to 6 miles

Grade 2: 6-10 miles

Grade 3: 10-15 miles

Grade 4: 15-20 miles

Elevation Gain Rating

Class A: up to 1000 feet

Class B: 1000-2000 feet

Class C: 2000-3000 feet

Conservation

Mosquito, noun. Winged insects of the family Culicidae in which the female of most species is distinguished by a long proboscis for sucking blood. Some species are vectors of diseases such as malaria and yellow fever (and west Nile virus). [Spanish, from mosca, fly, from Latin musca]. The scientific name Culicidae is derived from culex, the Latin name for gnat. *Adapted from American Heritage Dictionary.*

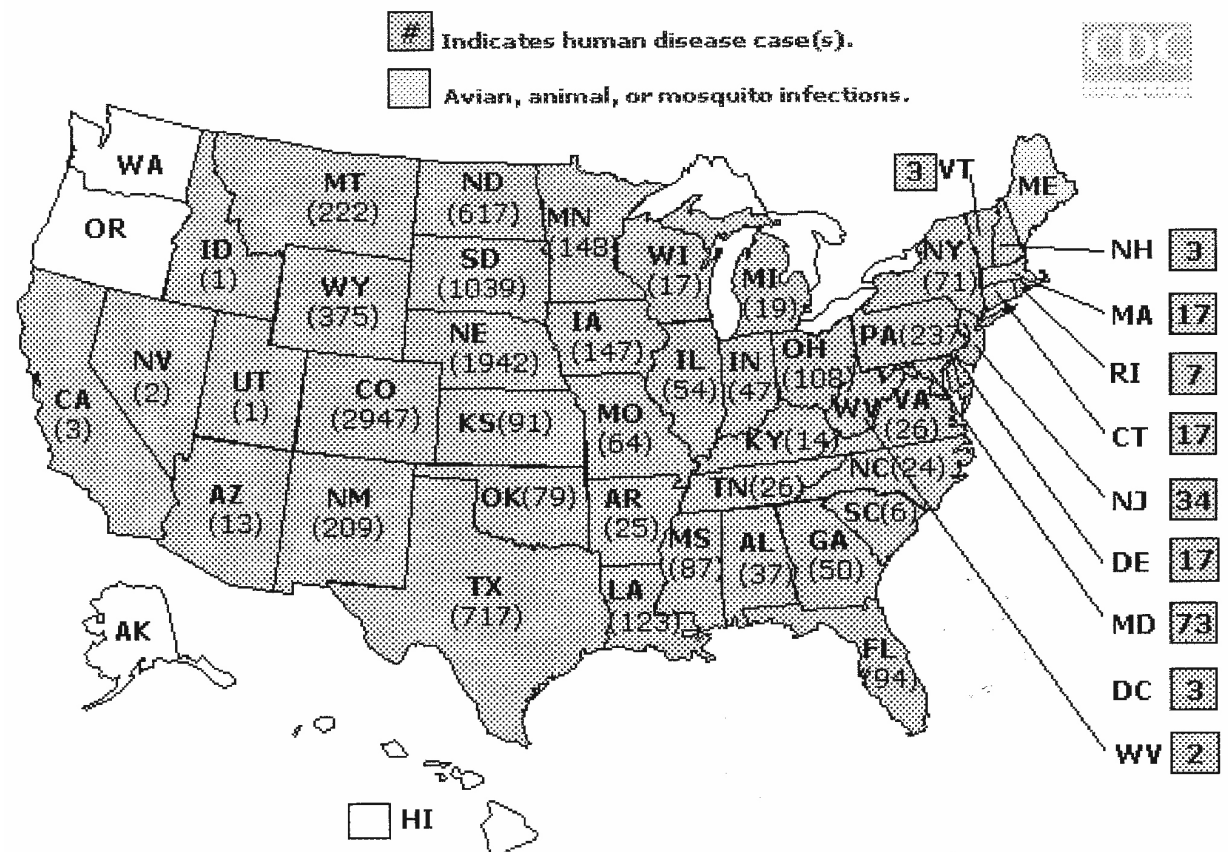
West Nile Virus: family Flaviviridae, genus flavivirus Japanese encephalitis antigenic complex which includes St. Louis encephalitis. All share a common size, symmetry, nucleic acid (single strand RNA), and electron microscopic appearance. *CDC web site.*

When I asked around Plumas County about west Nile disease, answers were, "Isn't west Nile Virus something in Missouri?" and, "Isn't west Nile virus a Mediterranean problem?" Well, California isn't Missouri, we live in a Mediterranean climate, and west Nile virus is here. Solutions turn out to be about flies, birds, self-protection, and the Government can't do it all.

Because there is confusion about flies, let's do a short primer. There are a lot of different blood-sucking flies that bite us, namely no-see-ums, or biting midges, (sometimes erroneously called buffalo gnats, an entirely different family), and black flies and their cousins, deer flies. But the ordinary mosquito, the least bothersome of all biters, is the one that could kill.

Mosquitoes (*Diptera*) are two-winged pesky flies with a prick-like bite. They are classified into three families, one of which includes the *Culicini* tribe that incorporates the *Culex* group, which are the ones that transmit west Nile virus (WNV). In northern California *Culex* are around from May through October, but unless you're an expert, you cannot tell one mosquito from another, so it's best to treat them all the same. After the female mosquito gets infected, classically from biting a crow with WNV, she becomes the bridge or "disease vector" between bird and us. We get WNV from a mosquito bite, not from direct contact with birds, horses, or humans. We are so-called "dead-end hosts".

Unless you live in the Antarctic, you encounter mosquitoes on every continent from sea to mountain peak, and from tropics to arctic. Like all other *diptera*, the mosquito has egg, larval, pupae, and adult stages. The adult is long, slender, has thin legs and strong wings that are built to fly. Their long needle-like snout and size make them easy to spot, but their phenomenal vision makes them hard to swat. The female, not the male, bites, and she is an indiscriminate blood-feeder indulging on birds and animals, including us. The female needs these blood meals to nourish her eggs and start the life cycle anew. With her bite, she injects a cocktail of salivary juices and enzymes that effect anesthesia and prevent our



blood from clotting. It's important to understand the point (sic) that when feeding, it's the female mosquito's saliva that infects us with the virus. WNV is but one of the *Flavivirus* group.

Since the mosquito is infectious, focusing on them has the most impact and can protect us and our families. To understand what needs to be done to reduce the mosquito population on your property and in your neighborhood, you need to understand some basics of mosquito breeding. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in water because their larva and pupae need stagnant wet spots to mature. So wet grasses, like well-watered lawns and golf courses, tree holes, leaf debris, drinking water fountains, old tires, discarded containers, and similar spots afford the best habitat. In an ideal environment, the entire process, from fertilized egg to hungry female adult that's ready to fly and eat, is less than a week. Mating takes place just after adult life begins. Shortly following her first blood meal, she will lay a multitude of fertile eggs, reinitiating the mosquito life cycle and the next biting crop.

Birds, the major reservoir for WNV, die soon after infection from encephalitis (brain swelling) which dampens the disease's progress but devastates the birds. WNV is deadly in birds, especially crows, and hundred of thousands of birds and thousands of infected horses have already died. There is a horse vaccine to prevent WNV that must be given before infection. Dogs and cats are not seriously affected and don't die from WNV. WNV is not yet in Plumas, Butte, Lassen, Colusa,

Glenn or Tehama Counties, but will arrive this summer as wintering birds move into their summer range up the Sacramento's tributaries.

In humans, WNV usually causes no symptoms or only a mild flu-like syndrome. Sometimes, WNV is more serious, causing encephalitis or spinal cord inflammation (meningitis); rarely WNV kills. It takes about 5 to 15 days to become sick, and severe symptoms usually strike only the elderly and folks with weak immune systems. There is no human vaccine to prevent WNV and no specific treatment that cures it. As of March 2002, around 4,000 human cases were reported nationwide with about 300 deaths. Fortunately, the chance of becoming infected by WNV from a single mosquito bite is small and, even if infected, the chance of becoming seriously ill is rare.

WNV is endemic in Europe but less lethal, likely because old world *Culex* bite only birds, not humans. WNV arrived in the USA the summer of 1999, most likely in a stowaway mosquito on an airplane landing at JFK. Shortly after, a crow was found dead from WNV and then human cases were reported. In 3 months, WNV spread from New York birds and humans to the Tri-state area killing tens of thousands of birds and infecting 62 people and killing 7. Hardest hit were *corvidae* which includes crows, jays, ravens, and magpies, but raptors, sparrows, finches, and blackbirds were also struck. WNV has now infected over 100 bird species. Blue jays are "off the chart" in their ability to replicate WNV. With birds wintering in the southern USA and beyond, WNV rapidly spread, so

Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus — *(Continued from page 8)*

by 2003, 46 of the 48 contiguous States, including California and Nevada, were infected. WNV is now

(continues on p. 9)

found in Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, because that's where infected birds flew. WNV is predicted to infect the entire USA by the end of 2004.

A good place to communicate ideas and concerns about WNV-bearing mosquitoes is at community meetings, such as homeowners' associations. Shop your ideas around, if only to get your neighbors interested. Since mosquitoes do not travel far, you can cut their numbers by removing obvious egg-laying spots such as still ponds, water-filled containers, standing puddles, grass clippings, and animal dung. Remember, lawns need water only every third day and it's better in early morning than at night. Daily watering is wasteful, and with WNV, might be dangerous. You golfers can ask the course manager about their fly abatement and watering schedule and avoid playing on watering days.

Change or remove standing water in flowerpots, pet dishes, roof gutters, plastic tarps, wading and swimming pools, and air out wet basements. Compost heaps should be turned once a week. Frequently change birdbath water and their drinking troughs. Stale water, standing where birds congregate, is a fly-breeding spot that awaits WNV transfer from any visiting infected bird to a mosquito. These are simple measures, but very effective in reducing your chances of being bitten and contracting a WNV infection.

Be sure your window screens fit tightly, have no holes, and are mounted prior to the start of mosquito season. To cut down on early morning and evening flies, use yellow bug-lights instead of white-light bulbs. Citronella candles help because they emit warmth, moisture and CO₂, which decoy flies away from humans. Bug "zappers" that conjure up those warm summer evenings at Grandma's kill beneficial bugs but not many female mosquitoes, so why invest in them? Ultrasonic emitters don't work very well either.

Stay indoors when mosquitoes are numerous and on the prowl, usually early morning and in evening when the wind is calm. Avoid clothes, as shorts and tee shirts, that invite bites. Hats, socks, long pants, and long sleeved, light-colored shirts are better than dark or bright shirts, which attract biters. Repellents work best when rubbed on clothes, hats, exposed skin and hair.

DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) is the most effective mosquito repellent around and lasts for several hours. It's safe to use when applied in appropriate concentrations and with common sense. Concentrations more than 15% are not necessary for mosquito-bite prevention, and higher concentrations can be useful for protection from other biting flies and ticks, but strengths greater than 50% are excessive. A 25 to 30% DEET concentration provides mosquito protection for about 5 hours, while 5 to 7% protects for about 1.5 hours. Unless the DEET product states it's waterproof, reapplication needs to be done after swimming, in the rain, or with heavy sweating.

Avon's "Skin-So-Soft" works but not as long or as well as DEET. However, it may be preferable in children when DEET use is a concern. Non-DEET repellents usually contain plant-based oils that protect for less than 2 hours. If you are concerned about DEET and curious about alternatives, review the Mayo Clinic web site; it has great tips.

If you find a dead bird, especially a crow or one from the crow family, it's all right to call the appropriate agency, and arrange for a free examination for WNV. In Plumas, call Environmental Health. They arrange for dead bird collections and the State pays for the test. If Animal Control is not in your area, negotiate about what to do next. After hours, it's OK to put the dead bird in a plastic bag, place it in your refrigerator, and arrange for collection the next day. Although you get WNV from mosquito bites, not from picking up dead birds, it seems prudent to use gloves and a plastic bag when handling the bird carcass. On a long weekend, when it might take days to reach someone, it's best to bury the bird. The bottom line is that the bird carcass must be picked up within 24 hours to be worth any analysis.

Eighteen of us gathered around the large, flat Indian grinding stone once used by the Maidu for grinding acorns, and observed a moment of silence. The spring sun shone down upon us. Cows grazed quietly upon the gently sloping hillside. Turkey vultures soared over the craggy cliffs, and butterflies flitted among the wildflowers, as we quietly remembered the people and the creatures who once populated this peaceful valley.

Peace Valley in the northern side of the Sutter Buttes has seen many changes since the 1820s when there were some 55,000 Indians living around the Buttes and when John Work, leader of the Hudson Bay Company's expedition, wrote that "there was excellent feeding for the horses and abundance of animals to subsist on: 395 elk, 148 deer, 17 bears and 8 antelope have been killed in a month."

The three tribes that lived along the flanks of the Buttes named it the "Middle Mountain." No one tribe laid claim to it. All considered the area sacred, and there were many restrictions, rituals and taboos surrounding one's traveling through it.

The great influx of foreigners who came to the area seeking furs, then gold -- and then land -- brought their diseases, their guns, and their foreign ideas. The peaceful Indians and the animals living alongside them didn't have a chance. What remains are the jagged mountains, this peaceful valley, and the large, lone grinding stone at our feet.

There we were, 18 of us, and all glad to be allowed access to California's newly acquired 1,785-acre park purchased in September 2003 for \$2.9 million. Because the State is still working on a use design that may take years, it wasn't easy to get in.

Unfortunately, like elsewhere, there is little State or County money for mosquito reduction purposes. In Plumas, it's a good idea to talk to the Agricultural Commissioner, especially regards use of larvicides like "BTI" and/or insect sprays. UC Cooperative Extension provides programs for horse owners and veterinarians. Public Health provides education and reports human infections. Remember to call your doctor if you suspect you are infected. In these days of governmental melt-down, a lot is left to your own ingenuity and energy. All this is also a civics lesson in the usefulness of simple self-help public health measures.

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

Some recommended informational web sites:

- State of California: West Nile surveillance.

The Sierra Club had to apply for a special use permit and provide proof of insurance. We had to drive along dusty private roads, unlock several gates and cross little streams. We had to carry bolt cutters in case an untrusting rancher decided to super-glue one of the locks, thus locking us in.

But in the end, we all agreed it was well worth the trouble, for Peace Valley was truly lovely and interesting.

We walked along the rutted dirt road and up to an oak-studded knoll where we surveyed the Pugh family cemetery and read about Peace Valley's first white settlers.

Aaron Pugh came to California in 1850 with the 49ers to find gold and to have some fine adventures like his friend Kit Carson always had. In 1854 he helped himself to 160 acres of land in the Sutter Buttes and named it "Peace Valley." Later he acquired adjoining lands until he had title to 2,000 acres. Here he raised sheep, planted a variety of grains, and buried three wives.

From up on that knoll, we looked down at the valley below and at the old Pugh homestead, now only a crumbling foundation and home to old, rusting farm equipment, overgrown with trees and shrubs.

After a lunch spent next to a pretty stream shaded by oak trees, we took the steady climb up the road to a large meadow filled with tall grasses. Half of us wandered around taking pictures, talking quietly or sitting in silent meditation. The other half climbed the nearby ridges and sat at the top to quietly view snow-covered Mt. Lassen.

Hitched Together

It took me nearly two weeks to finish the book, "In the Dust of Kilimanjaro," by David Western, because not only is it filled with insights into African wildlife and the Maasai tribe people, but it speaks of conservation interconnectedness that applies everywhere. I would recommend that every Sierra Club member read this book to get a broad view of earth's environmental problems, often beginning in your neighborhood.

We again hear the words of John Muir and his thought of "Everything in the Universe is hitched together," in echoing some of writer Western's ideas. Africa seems a long way from California and Butte County and local conservation interactions, yet, indeed, many earth situations are universal. David Western's experience in researching biological problems, particularly in what is now the Amboseli National Park, his affinity with rural people, and ascendancy to Director of the Kenya Wildlife Service, offer some sterling revelations in wildlife management and the need to involve locals in governmental decisions, especially farmers. As David states, "The best hope for sustaining life's diversity lies in embedding conservation values in the lives of rural people."

Several chapters are devoted to the elephant problem in Africa. Elephants need space to survive, places where they can roam freely and use what is good for them. Previously slaughtered by ivory hunters, elephants smartly found newly established parks where they had some protection, but then there was conflict with increasing human populations forced into farming. Western's research showed that a balance of elephants was helpful in reducing acacia trees, a feeding habit that allowed more grassland for cattle and grazing wildlife. Loss of too many trees, however, results in elimination of some tree-connected species and instills landscape monotony. Too much of anything compounds problems. Electric fences became one way of keeping elephants out of farm land, but as with all big-game animals, like bear and lion and even deer, you wonder if the expanding human population and intrusion into wildlife range land will leave enough room for large animal needs.

I recognized that many of David Western's ideas about nature co-existing with farmers is reflected right here in Butte County. We see several forms of land-cooperatives in our region, and some ranchers conduct agriculture with consideration for wildlife and habitats. As the author points out, containing wildlife in a separate National or State Park often severs the land occupants from a connection to the bigger scene, and species are often doomed by isolation. Parks are good ideas, and we should be thankful for those attainments, even if some are "monument" parks, but "corridors," and "cooperation" are especially helpful in conservation and the ecological connection. But, as Western states, "Conservation never provides a final solution, only a temporary reprieve for

wildlife."

John Muir worked hard to help secure Yosemite as a National Park and it is connected with the rest of the Sierra to allow an animal intermingling, but Central California has become an isolated island effectively reducing the original inhabitants and often altering the landscape drastically. Gone are the scattered oak groves where the Spanish explorers marched from the Sacramento River to Chico "in shade all the way." Other than England and some other over-drawn landscapes where nearly all the forests have been removed, central California may be one of the most altered regions in the world. That alteration reached right up into the foothills where hydraulic mining and timber harvests took their toll in the 1800's. Protections have been obtained and nature will bounce back in time, but there is continual battle to stem the tide of industrial take-over. John Muir also said, "The battle for conservation will go on endlessly. It is part of the universal warfare between right and wrong."

When I was a boy in rural Missouri, the Missouri Conservation Commission was just starting to encourage farm wildlife cooperation, utilizing "Game Wardens" as Conservation Agents, helping farmers to build fenced farm ponds, stock fish, and plant wildlife crops along unused fields. They went on to restock turkey, deer, and beaver. I found great zeal in being an official "Nature Knight," which provided a large amount of pamphlets and study aides. But even then farmers contributed a type of wildlife conservation by allowing thick fence rows of brush and field-corner wood lots, habitat vital to animals. Some of that was eliminated when small farms were vacated and a big cooperative leveled a large region for crops. In recent years, I was gratified to see up to 40-acre plots converted to ungrazed fields in a process where the farmer was paid more for that use than gained in crops. "Build it, and they will come!" Western said, "Yet there is something deeper to conservation than a passion for saving the Amazon, the gorilla, and the whale. For most conservationists, what began as a preoccupation with saving a favorite species or patch of wilderness grew into a concern for all forms of life. Ultimately, conservation boils down to a disquiet over the threats human beings pose to other species and the health of the entire planet on which our species, too, depends."

"Community-based conservation and locally-based conservation: The issues – space and coexistence – are the same worldwide. In the rural areas, either we value the land, live within it sustainably, and find an extensive place for nature, or we face a biologically and physically degraded world. Overuse of the land will reduce its ability to provide our most basic needs and overwhelm the self-replicating and self-cleansing capacity of the soils, waters, and the atmosphere."

"Conservation will cease to be a singular activity based on biology and resource use. Instead, it will be the sum of many interrelated

Remembering John Muir

By Jeanne Woodbury

In 1976, the California Historical Society voted John Muir "The Greatest Californian." He has also been called "The Father of Our National Parks" and "Protector of the Wilds." His name remains in the places he grew up and the places he loved: Muir Glacier (Alaska), Muir Memorial Park (Wisconsin), Muir Country Park (Dunbar, Scotland), and the John Muir Trail (California).

Muir was a husband, father of two daughters, writer, lecturer, geologist, botanist, glacier expert, naturalist, farmer, explorer, teacher, inventor and conservationist. It would take days to read all there is about Muir on the Internet and a lot longer to read the 300 magazine articles and 10 major books he wrote and published.

In California, we recognize "John Muir Day" on April 21, Muir's birthday. Chico State's Environmental Affairs Council served up birthday cake in Muir's honor on that day this year. The Chico Museum is currently spotlighting him in their "Yosemite Remembered" exhibit because of his role in getting President Theodore Roosevelt and Congress to protect 230 million acres of public land, including what we now call Yosemite National Park.

Though born in Scotland, raised in the backwoods of Wisconsin and a world-wide traveler, Muir considered California his home and lived here for 45 years until his death in 1914.

In 1892, Muir and his supporters founded the Sierra Club to, in Muir's words, "do something for wildness and make the mountains glad."

Muir often guided people (sometimes a hundred at a time) into Yosemite and other wild areas to share his great love of nature, and he fought tirelessly to preserve what we in (and out of) the Sierra Club enjoy so much today.

So is it any wonder that John Muir's likeness will soon be gracing California's special 2005 quarter, along with Yosemite's Half Dome and a soaring California condor?

During the coin's unveiling on March 29, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who made significant suggestions for the final design, said, "John Muir has taught us to be active and to enjoy, but at the same time protect our parks, our

Conservation

The State of the Sierras

By Rex Burress

As I write, it is Earth Day, 2004. Yesterday was John Muir's birthday, and April is an appropriate time for both occasions, even though initial Earth Day promoter John McConnell preferred March 21, the day of the spring equinox, as a proper day to celebrate our planet.

I was actually pursuing the subject of fossils on John's 166th birthday, an interest ignited by some Jurassic leaf fossils I found below Oroville Dam, and I was fleecing my Muir manuscripts trying to find his impressions of prehistoric imprints. I'm sure he was quite aware of ancient evidence, since he expounded on the gouge-marks of glaciers and tromped around a lot of rock in his earthly saunterings, and not much escaped his eye. Other than some paragraphs about examining leaf fossils in the Arctic Sea islands aboard the Cruise of the Corwin, I didn't find any philosophical remarks about fossils.

John Muir, "Father of National Parks," as well as the Sierra Club, a real Earth Day man, was more inclined to elaborate on the grandeur of mountains, enthusiastic phrases gushing forth like a fountain, even as he was vocally urging people to look at the Sierras not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life. "Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike," he said. It is fortunate for nature devotees of our present generation that John had the vision to project protection for Yosemite and other special places, or we would be hard-pressed to find outdoor access and sanctuary in "mountain parks and reservations."

Although Muir had some educated instincts about geology and the formation of the Sierras, realizing it was a granitic upthrust through a volcanic landscape, the Tectonic Plate theories were not outlined until the 1960's. Author John McPhee has interpreted the work of Tectonicist Eldridge Moores of the University of California at Davis in his book, "Assembling California," and has proposed that the Sierra granitic batholith block that developed from magma deep in the earth is affected by the Pacific Tectonic Plate shoving against the continent, rising rather recently on the geologic time scale, perhaps 25 million years ago, or sooner, and is still moving. During the 1800's, there was little information about the approximate dimensions of the Sierra

batholith, a zeppelin-like mass of granite now considered as covering 25 thousand square miles, 400 miles long, 90 miles wide, and six miles deep. That is the Sierra mountain range John explored, tilted, as 19th century geologist Clarence King said, "like an sea wave breaking upon Nevada." That is the Sierras underlying the Sierra Club on planet Earth and part of the original reason John spearheaded the formation of the club.

It's difficult to imagine streams flowing from Nevada across what is now the Sierras in relatively recent times, geologically speaking, when mastodons, giant ground sloths, camels, and saber-toothed cats roamed the plains. What may be happening down under the crust – or what could hit us from outer space – could put quarreling political ideologies to shame.

In this time and place of Sierra Club elections, and the contentious question of whether the club should be involved in immigration and the overpopulation problems attached, we wonder what John Muir would think. How far over the globe should the club's efforts extend? What causes should be emphasized? Of course, Muir had little idea to what extent expanding human populations would accelerate when he was encouraging people to "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings." It is hard to visualize hordes of park visitors tramping down the meadows and playing havoc with habitats, to the point human limitations are needed to control the surge, when the late 1800's entertained little intrusion from the public. I can imagine John objecting over park overuse, just as he disliked the sheep intrusion. He would have admired people's appreciation for the out-of-doors, but nevertheless, conservation was the key ingredient of his endeavors, and controlled intrusion is vital. But even he might say the resources to control immigration may lie outside the Sierra Club's coffers.

What would John Muir say about the current state of world affairs? One could imagine his disgust at so much money being spent on blowing up the enemy, just as he was dismayed by the bloodshed of the Civil War. It is not clear if he traveled in Canada during the Civil War to avoid that ruinous conflict that destroyed not only human lives but flowers and animals and

things he loved and felt obliged to conserve, but war goes against the wishes of any earth- and nature-conscious person. Even though he would write home to see if he had been drafted, he would not volunteer, and said, "War is the farthest reaching and most infernal of all civilized calamities."

John preferred to think of living things as a united community on earth, traveling together as he said when speaking of trees: "They go wandering forth in all directions with every wind, going and coming like ourselves, traveling with us around the sun two million miles a day, and through space heaven knows how fast and far!" This man who signed off as "Earth, Planet, Universe," was above the petty wars of societal envy-ness. "When we contemplate the whole globe as one great dewdrop, striped and dotted with continents and islands, flying through space with all other stars all singing and shining together as one, the whole universe appears as an infinite storm of beauty."

However, John Muir was a bloodless warrior in advocating the wonders of nature and the need for conservation protection. He said, "The battle we have fought, and are still fighting for the forests is a part of the eternal conflict between right and wrong," and "Government protection should be thrown around every wild grove and forest on the mountains, as it is around every private orchard, and the trees in public parks."

Those of like mind will always remember his effort to save Hetch Hetchy. "These temple-destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism, seem to have a perfect

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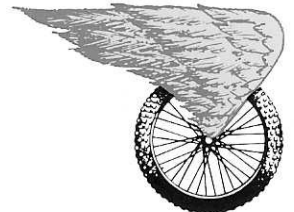
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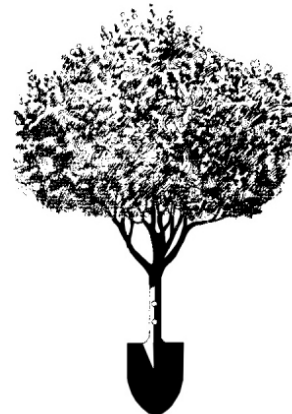
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