



Yahi Group



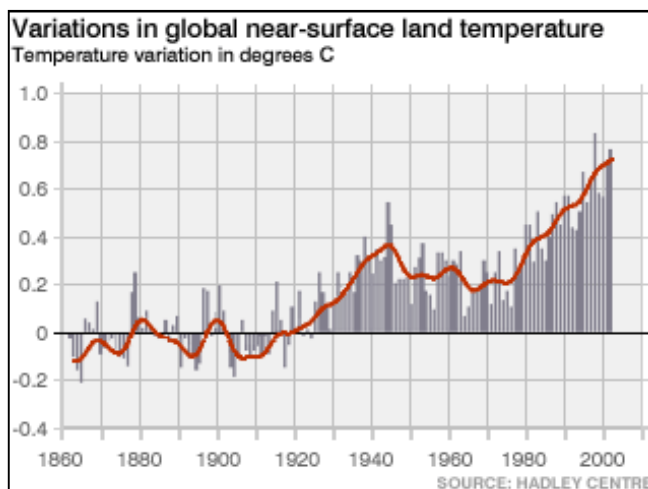
News Articles Programs Hikes and Outings Meetings Events

Adverse changes to aerial and oceanic atmospheres, upon which all planetary life depends, will intensify our weather by increasing heat production and absorption.

In April, both author-zoologist Tim Flannery and climate-impact scientist Amy Lynd Luers independently presented results of their research on the causes and effects of global warming on our planet and upon California.

Dr. Flannery, Australian by birth and accent, is author of the best-seller, The Weather Makers, and known internationally for popularizing scientific warnings that modern weather changes are man-made. His theme: ever-increasing energy demands of wealthy nations in the northern hemisphere (the industrial West) adversely affect world weather through consumption of fossil fuels that produce carbon dioxide and methane that heat our planet and oceans. These polluting elements remain in our space for hundreds of years.

The natural forces that produce, control and moderate climate are in exquisite balance. But mankind's industrial successes have overwhelmed nature's balances, to our self-detriment. These changes already result in widespread droughts, intensified hurricanes and typhoons, and extinction of species, with the cost being paid by the already impoverished nations in the southern hemisphere, especially those of sub-Saharan Africa. And future weather will be



altered beyond what mankind and the planet have yet experienced. When the planet's ice fields all melt, our oceans will be hotter and higher, flooding the world's most expensive real estate. Holland and south Florida will be totally submerged.

Stanford-trained Dr. Luers presented findings from the Union of Concerned Scientists' weather prediction models, demonstrating how different levels of greenhouse warming will affect California. Her theme: California can expect deadly heat waves, increasing air pollution, hotter and longer forest fire seasons, disappearance of the Sierra's forest and snow pack resulting in less water for agriculture and cities, and a decrease in agricultural productivity. Agricultural pests will multiply. Smog-induced respiratory diseases will adversely impact human health. It is not a pretty

picture. And these predictions did not take into account California's growth in population, expected to be in the millions over the next 20 years. The *Book of Job* would have made better bedtime reading.

Is it possible to stop these man-made weather changes? To stabilize weather at its present level, Flannery states the world needs to reduce carbon emissions by 90% in the next 40 years. Both scientists emphasized the West's moral responsibility to develop and use non-carbon, non-methane-emitting energy technologies that industrialized China and India will likely purchase. The citizens of the West must make serious moral decisions such as not tolerating more species extinction. Is this feasible?

Don't expect our Government to lead the way as has been accomplished in Singapore, where autos are absent from streets due to high taxes and a good public transportation system. It is our individual problem to solve. Mankind's and the world's future is in each of our hands.

Suggested reading:

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Yahi Group Club Notes

Hope summertime is starting out wonderfully for you and that you will include the club in your plans! **Gudrun** (aka "Goodie") **Sweatt** will be polishing arrangements for our July 20 program about California wilderness areas - of interest to armchair and outdoor Yahi, their guests, and the public. This program will feature **Gordon Johnson** (Shasta Group) employing a variety of media to explain and entertain. Please read more about the program elsewhere in this newsletter - to be held at 7:00 P.M. at Chico's Public Library (East First and Sherman Avenues).

Janet Fries, a new board member, is making the arrangements for tabling - not only at our quarterly programs but also at the more "challenging" events such as the EcoFest at Chico State (where **Norma Odell** helped) and the Endangered Species Faire at Bidwell Park. Events such as these make Janet's very special creative talents flow, as she has a desire to reach out to children, teens and young adults - as well as the rest of us. She needs volunteers to help at such events. Please call her if you are interested: (530)345-7824. Janet also has some exciting

grant application ideas, where she has experience and expertise.

About 150 people turned out for our very special April 20 program. **Goodie Sweatt** arranged for **Frank Helling** - an absolutely delightful and inspiring impersonator of John Muir, the founder of the Sierra Club - to visit Chico. He knows Muir's life so well that he stayed in character when answering the audience's questions after the main performance; after all, he was the Bidwells' old friend and visited them often in the 19th Century. He entertained us at a reception at Lyon's Books before the show at Chico State. This event was co-sponsored by the Provost's Office at CSU, Chico, thanks to the university's very active commitment to "sustainability," and thus, **Provost Scott McNall's** desire to partner with the Sierra Club.

Goodie Sweatt and others worked for weeks on the event, and **Norma Odell, Margo Milliken, Janet Fries, Susan Sears** and **Louise Casey** helped get out an amazing amount of publicity. And special thanks go to CSU, Chico, for providing us, at no cost, a terrific auditorium at the Performing Arts Center.

Debra ("Deb") Moon has been very active as Conservation Chair, as she is involved in numerous environmental efforts from Chico (the John Muir program and environmental meetings) to Portola (plans for a pike clean-up and discussing issues with concerned citizens. She also attended a Vernal Pools Conference. Thanks for the generous sponsorship of **Patrick E. Kelly** (who was not interested in recognition), as well as **Julian Zener, Timmarie Hamill** and me. Deb also worked with **Walt Schafer**, the new Chair of the Yahi Political Committee; they both studied official Sierra Club procedures for gaining not just Yahi but also national Sierra Club support for local candidates who want our official endorsement. If you would like to help Walt Schafer with interviewing candidates, writing letters, etc., please call him at (530)343-6857. Please call Debra Moon at (530)343-9204 if you might be interested in helping her with conservation work, e.g., attending, participating in, and reporting on environmental meetings near or far. (Note: the Yahi Group covers five counties, and it consists only of volunteers. Please see boxed insert listing other leaders to contact.)

Our Outings program includes many exciting trips this summer. I hope you can join the Coordinator, **Alan Mendoza**, or one of the other outings leaders on some trips listed in this newsletter. Related note: we need to support Clair Tappaan Lodge (Norden, CA) both through our outings and by going to the lodge on our own (\$45 per night including three meals). If their occupancy increases, then "national" will not be tempted to sell this lodge that many of us see as the embodiment of the Sierra Club spirit. Please check out www.ctl.sierraclub.org or give them a call at 1-800-679-6775.

Some brief notes: **Gene Anna McMillan** worked long and hard on a highway litigation issue,

Sierra Club Contacts in the Yahi Group Area

General Contact

Linda Stukey: 530-345-2696
She will relay inquiries or comments to the appropriate person.

Executive Committee Officers

Chair: Grace Marvin:
530-893-1994 or GMRADM@aol.com

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530-566-1348 or neodell@chiconet.com

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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 or 5590 Feather River Place, Paradise, CA 95969, Attn: Louise Casey.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to Yahi Group of the Sierra Club, Post Office Box 2012, Chico, CA 95927 or 5590 Feather River Place, Paradise, CA 95969, Attn: Louise Casey.

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

Submission Guidelines:

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

Yahi Group Conservation Notes

Lake Davis

I have been in contact with Bill Powers, the Steering Committee Chair for the Lake Davis Northern Pike Eradication Project, and Terry Davis regarding our participation in the Steering Committee. We do not have a seat on the committee, but they would like us to provide input. Terry Davis has recommended a "fish expert," Brian Faust to advise the committee on our behalf. I have been invited to the committee meetings which are the third Monday of each month.

BPMMP

(Bidwell Park Master Management Plan)

I am participating in the "Bidwell Summit Group," a group of representatives from several environmental and local park affiliated groups who meet to try to change the language of the BPMMP to define "wilderness preserve," and clarify other terms and parameters in the plan, since the 1990 plan declaring the park a wilderness preserve did not prevent developed recreation. The group has met once, and right now I am working on helping to isolate "trouble spots" in the plan, rewriting with clearer language and researching quotes and text in documents of the Bidwells that may assist to preserve the park according to their intentions.

CEN Community Environmental Network

Gene Anna McMillan and Grace Marvin attended the most recent of these meetings. We are lending our support to Butte Environmental Council (BEC) and Barbara Vlamis by attending meetings and encouraging BEC, although the Sierra Club has withdrawn from the 60-day letter. BEC is leading the effort to slow and monitor development of infrastructure, and other building, in the area of the Highway 99 corridor between Chico and the Oroville turn off at Highway 149. The California Native Plant Society and Alta Cal Audubon Society are involved also. The problem is the lack of a development plan from Butte County for the area and the fear that the land will be developed haphazardly once the infrastructure is there. Barbara Vlamis is bearing the brunt of the labor and stress for this important effort and needs support from all of us.

Yahi Executive

Yahi Group Executive Committee meetings are usually held the first Thursday of every month from 7PM to 9PM. Please contact Grace Marvin: 530-893-1994 or GMRADM@aol.com regarding the specific place and time if you would like to attend or if you have an item you would like placed on the agenda.

More CEN work by Gene Anna: she has also attended meetings to develop a Land Trust in Butte County. The mission is to protect and preserve land for agricultural use, range and enjoyment, and ensure that development will be infill and upward, not sprawl. They have ranchers and farmers amongst the group as well as concerned citizens that live in town. They are drafting an initiative that will not make it on this year's ballot, but will serve to motivate the Butte County Board of Supervisors to put some teeth in their general plan, we hope.

Vernal Pools Conference

Yahi Group Chair Grace Marvin, Conservation Chair Debra Moon, former Conservation Chair Pat Kelly, Hiking Leader Julian Zener, and Citizen Monitoring Representative Timmarie Hamill all attended the Vernal Pools Conference. The conference was very informative, professional and worthwhile. It brought a lot of people together in an interesting forum of both formal and informal interaction.

Tiechert Ponds, located just east of Hwy 99 in south Chico, were accidentally man-made over 50 years ago by the gravel company that worked on the freeway; however, at this point, they are a vernal pool ecosystem that is being damaged by further dumping of waste. The city has a plan to clean up and preserve the ponds, but has been slow in acting on it. Advocate Dick Cory came to our Yahi Group Ex Com meeting asking our support to petition the city to make the area a park. Concerned that a park would mean unlimited public access, we asked him to re-consider, asking for it to be a study

Club Notes *(continued from page 2)*

while **Deb Moon** participated in a Sierra Club *(continued on page 3)*

Latino Outreach event. **Janet Fries** plans to attend a Sierra Club-sponsored Sprawl Mitigation Workshop in Sacramento in June. **David Nopel** is receiving this year's Yahi Group Appreciation Award for all his club work, including hikes bearing on the Bidwell Park anniversary, and helping to get our newsletter out every quarter. **Louise Casey** was accepted in what we hope will be an exciting Sierra Club Newsletter/Web Editor's Conference in San Francisco. The Yahi Group will contribute \$100, while all other expenses will be paid by the National Club. The Yahi are very grateful for all her work (as well as that of others!) and are more than glad to contribute. I plan to attend a Sierra Nevada Alliance Conference in August. Many others have been active as well. Please accept our thanks for all your volunteer efforts, from letter writing and speaking out at meetings, to clearing trails and participation in a large variety of needed environmental efforts.

Goodie Sweatt has been a fine Program Coordinator in 2006, but new work commitments will keep her from helping us next year. So we are

Sierra Club Local, State Candidate Endorsements

The Sierra Club has endorsed **Maureen Kirk** in the June 6 election for Butte County Supervisor, District 3.

As a Chico City Councilperson, Candidate Kirk has consistently voted in support of environmental protections (e.g., keeping Bidwell Ranch as open space, moving Oak Valley development into lower foothills, acquiring Comanche Creek).

As the Chico member of the County Water Advisory Board, she has consistently advocated and voted for quality water and protection of this vital resource. She has worked constructively on the state-mandated Nitrate Compliance Program.

Ms. Kirk considers environmental issues to be important in this election. Her campaign positions are generally consistent with Sierra Club priorities.

The Sierra Club has also announced the following endorsements for statewide races:

- Lieutenant Governor: **Liz Figueroa, John Garmendi, and Jackie Speier**
- Attorney General: **Jerry Brown**
- Controller: **John Chiang and Joe Dunn**
- Secretary of State: **Debra Bowen**
- Treasurer: **Bill Lockyer**

looking for a new Program Chair for 2007 (four programs per year). We also are looking for two new Executive Committee Members for the Yahi Group to complement the spirited leaders we have. We meet once a month in Chico from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M., We ask that Ex-Com members consider taking on a few responsibilities beyond attending the meetings, related to personal time and interests as well as to the club's needs.

For example, right now we would like someone to help with advance planning for our fund-raising event, e.g., wine-tasting in the fall of 2006 or a garden tour in the spring of 2007. We also would be very happy if we could find someone who would be willing to reach out to young people, e.g., tabling at events, meeting with groups at our local colleges and schools. Our Ex-Com members need to be in frequent contact, at least by email, so that we all feel comfortable helping one another with both our short-term tasks and with the Sierra Club policies and mission: enjoying nature, educating the public about our planet and protecting it - especially through regional and local initiatives. Please call me at (530)893-1994 or email me if you are interested in being a leader or just being someone who is available for short-term tasks!

Letters to the Editor

Newsletter articles, Joe Abbott's Rotenone Plan Article/Talk and

Re: Newsletter articles, Joe Abbott's Rotenone Plan article/talk, and an open letter

I would like to recommend that published articles that don't necessarily represent the Sierra Club's point of view (and are really just personal opinions) be better labeled as such. Otherwise, the articles need to be fact checked for accuracy. Joe Abbott's recent article is a case in point. It was not placed in the letters to the editor Section but was instead included in the conservation section. Most people reading such an article would probably infer that this is the Sierra Club's position on the topic. Any disclaimer hidden somewhere in the paper would most likely go unnoticed.

I live in a very conservative community (Plumas County). Most people from this area don't hold the Sierra Club in high regard. I work hard to put our club, its activities, contributions and opinions in the best possible light. Published inflammatory, inaccurate and mostly undocumented opinions represented as fact only serve to embarrass our organization. They create a greater chasm between those of us that are primarily concerned with healthy ecosystems and those who have other priorities. Many of us are now seeing the value of forging alliances/relationships with groups we would not normally side with in order to achieve common goals. Many of us see environmentalism almost as a religion (I'm probably as guilty of this as any) but we should strive to be on the side of good science. If we let emotion trump accurate analysis of the available data, we appear as extremists. This would prevent us from being taken seriously. I want the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), fishermen and the Portola community to look to the Sierra Club for guidance, not treat us with disdain.

I have included a critique of Joe Abbott's presentation to the Sierra Club on 19 January 2006 as well as an open letter to DFG regarding the Lake Davis Pike Eradication Project. The letter is presented in a question/comment form. You may use any of the above as you see fit and as it benefits the Sierra Club. It is my sincere desire to make us a better, more effective and respected organization. I do not want this to turn into a John Shower versus Joe Abbott forum. The Lake Davis project is a big deal to our community and to the state's waterways. Sierra Club can participate in a positive manner and be part of the solution to an important ecological problem, or we can sit on the sidelines and take potshots and then complain about the results. If we get involved with this project, I suggest we do so effectively by engaging our best and most knowledgeable people.

Critique of Joe Abbott's Presentation To the Sierra Club on 19 January 2006

[Ed. note: John Shower expressed his strong disagreement with some of the points Joe Abbott made in his Lake Davis presentation to the January Yahi meeting and which we also included in our spring newsletter. He felt we should not have printed it at all. I reminded him that our newsletter is intended to be a forum for the exchange of ideas among our readers and that if he wished to write a dissenting viewpoint, we would gladly print it.]

In general, Joe's talk was inflammatory, inaccurate and contained mostly undocumented opinions. Some of the specifics include:

Claim: 95% of California's inland Salmonid fisheries are devastated.

Implication: Why worry about effects of pike infestation and how could they possibly ruin what's already ruined?

Not explained or considered: Species usually become imperiled for multiple reasons and pike infestation could be the final straw for threatened/endangered species. The last thing they need is one more major problem. Additionally, there are numerous species (game and non-game) that could be negatively impacted by a pike infestation - including striped bass, sunfish, various minnow species and planted and wild Salmonids. Ref. Contra Costa Times, front page article on 28 February 2006 on another problem facing Delta fish.

Claim: Portola has a tourist-based economy.

Implication: Poisoning the lake will devastate their economy again.

Not explained or considered: The Portola economy is more diversified now than 10 years ago when the lake was first poisoned. Also, if nothing is done regarding the pike infestation, the "trophy trout lake" will no longer attract fishermen who spend lots of money in the Portola community. Thus, dealing with the problem now may cause short-term economic pain but will help to ensure long-term economic stability.

Claim: Lake Davis is an artificial body of water with planted fish.

Implication: It's all fake and thus not worth saving.

Not explained or considered: Lake Davis is an extremely rich biological community supporting thousands of waterfowl and other birds and wildlife that a meadow and stream would not support. There is a greater diversity of animals than would be supported if the lake were not there. This is not an ordinary reservoir with little to offer but planted trout ready to be caught and dragged home. It is part of a major flyway (connected to the Sierra Valley corridor). California has lost many of its wetlands, and Lake Davis is an important part of what is left.

Claim: Lake Davis is/was Portola's water supply.

Implication: What is Portola going to do?

Not explained or considered: Portola currently uses deep wells for its domestic water use. Joseph Abbott claimed the wells' arsenic levels were increasing. This is probably not the case. The State of California has become more restrictive with regard to arsenic levels, thus the

current wells are now not in compliance. Julie Cunningham, DFG Biologist, confirmed this.

Claim: Mr. Abbott showed us a map of Lake Davis and quickly pointed out numerous ("dozens of") creeks entering the lake.

Implication: It will be impossible to treat them all.

Not explained or considered: There are but three permanently flowing creeks (Upper Grizzly, Cow and Freeman); the others are considered intermittent. The intermittent creeks are short-term/snow runoff - not sustaining trout or pike (usually not even containing trout or pike).

Claim: Lake Davis fishermen are all beer-swilling meat fishermen using motorboats, mostly from Reno.

Implication: Lake Davis serves lowlifes not worthy of all this fuss and expense.

Not explained or considered: This is a gross misrepresentation of the Lake Davis fishermen. First, Frenchman Lake is the favorite for Reno. I'm not sure what proportion of fishermen use motorized boats for trolling and bait fishing, but there are a multitude of fishing methods used, and fishermen come from all over to ply their skills. Some other popular methods include: float tubes, kick boats, prams, bank fishing, and wading combined with fly rods, spinning and bait-casting rigs. Artificial lures and flies are just as commonly used as is bait. Most of the fishermen I know don't take alcoholic beverages to the lake. In short, Lake Davis cuts through all stereotypes, and it is unfair to generalize in such a way. By his own admission, Mr. Abbott does not frequent the lake and appears to have little knowledge of the composite of fisherman types that do frequent the lake.

Claim: He presented eight possible solutions to the pike-trout problem.

Implication: DFG is only considering one: poison.

Not explained or considered: The steering committees originally considered 13 proposals, many of which were quickly discarded because they had little possibility of success and/or were just plain silly and were not serious suggestions for correcting the problem. He either isn't grounded in reality and/or has a poor grasp of practical applications. Some of them include: (1) leave the lake alone and go away; (2) make Portola the Northern Pike fishing capital of the West; (3) let the pike multiply and harvest them commercially; and (4) drain all the water from the reservoir and return it to a meadow. The first three are recipes for disaster, exacerbating the potential to devastate California's inland fisheries. The fourth suggestion is one that the business community of Portola would not, at present, accept. This fourth suggestion would only make sense if this or possibly another attempt to control the pike failed.

Claim: Rotenone is a heavy-duty poison.

Implication: It is on the level of DDT or equivalent.

Not explained or considered: No supporting data were provided for this or any of the other seven claims mentioned above. Poisons are potentially bad news, especially when released into the environment. But Rotenone is a natural substance

Wildfire Defensible Space Requirement Now 100'

Senate Bill 1396, passed by the California Senate in August 2004, and signed by the Governor in September 2004, amended Public Resources Code 4291 to extend the wildfire defensible space requirement around structures from 30' to 100'.

From October to December 2005 and again from January to February 2006, the State Board of Forestry took public comment on interpretation of this requirement, then in February 2006 adopted the final Regulation Language and final Guidelines for implementation (see http://www.fire.ca.gov/CDFBOFDB/board/board_proposed_rule_packages.aspx under Defensible Space 2005). Public comments and the BOF's responses may also be viewed at the above website.

The Regulation Language states: "(1) Within 30 feet from each building or structure maintain a firebreak by removing and clearing away all flammable vegetation and other combustible growth pursuant to PRC § 4291(a). Single specimens of trees or other vegetation may be retained provided they are well spaced, well-pruned, and create a condition that avoids spread of fire to other vegetation or to a building or structure. (2) Within the 30 feet to 100 feet zone (Reduced Fuel Zone) from each building or structure (or to the property line, whichever is nearer to the structure), provide a fuelbreak by disrupting the vertical and/or horizontal continuity of flammable and combustible vegetation with the goal of reducing fire intensity, inhibiting fire in the crowns of trees, reducing the rate of fire spread, and providing a safer environment for firefighters to suppress wildfire pursuant to PRC § 4291(b)."

Thus, clear-cutting all vegetation and trees is NOT required! The State Senate and the Board of Forestry both recognized the aesthetic value of trees and ornamental shrubbery. Regarding trees, SB 1396 required, "(3) Remove that portion of any tree that extends within 10 feet of the outlet of any chimney or stovepipe. (4) Maintain any tree adjacent to or overhanging any building free of dead or dying wood. (5) Maintain the roof of any structure free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth." Besides being beautiful, trees also provide shade that helps retain ground-level humidity, thus

lowering wildfire risk, especially ignition risk.

SB 1396 also recognized that vegetation is essential to preventing soil erosion from water running off sloping land. "Grass and other vegetation located more than 30 feet from the dwelling or structure and less than 18 inches in height above the ground may be maintained where necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion."

The Board also recognized that many homeowners would prefer to keep the dense stands of vegetation that provide a visual screen. "Loss of the screening can result in undesired visual effects on those residents in wildlands areas that value the remote setting. Key to the mitigation process will be developing fuel hazard reduction prescriptions which reduce visual impacts while meeting the hazard reduction objective. With the guideline providing options for incorporating screening elements via leaving well-spaced vegetation and continuous overstory canopies, opportunities to mitigate impacts to aesthetic settings are provided."

Defensible Space 2005 "establishes a broad and flexible firebreak clearing objective consistent with the statute". It is a "performance standard regulation", meaning that it sets an objective that is required to be met. "The standard generally requires disrupting the vertical and/or horizontal continuity of flammable and combustible vegetation with the goal of reducing fire intensity, inhibiting fire in the crowns of trees, reducing the rate of fire spread, and providing a safer environment for firefighters to suppress wildfire."

General Guidelines for Creating Defensible Space is the document to which homeowners and contractors should refer. It gives examples of fuel modification measures in different fuel types, and it warns about using metal blades that can spark a fire, keeping soil disturbance to a minimum, and avoiding riparian areas.

"In all cases, fuel reduction means arranging the trees, shrubs and other fuels sources in a way that makes it difficult for fire to transfer from one fuel source to another. It does not mean cutting down all trees and shrubs, or creating a bare ring of earth across the property."

"Grass generally should not exceed 4 inches in height. However, homeowners may keep grass and other forbs less than 18 inches in height above the ground when these grasses are isolated from other fuels or where necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion."

Removing the lowest limbs from trees is essential and should generally be done up to 6 to 15 feet (or one-third the height of smaller trees). If shrubbery is left under a tree canopy, then there should be a minimum vertical space, between the top of those shrubs and the bottom of the lower tree branches, of 3 times the height of the shrub. On generally level ground the "rule of thumb" horizontal spacing between shrubs is 10 feet.

Steeper slopes require greater spacing, from 20 to

30 feet. "Groups of vegetation (numerous plants growing together less than 10 feet in total foliage width) may be treated as a single plant."

Though not discussed, proper pruning is needed to prevent rotting of the vegetation one wishes to preserve. Branch stubs left to die back to the trunk can introduce pathogens, as will branches cut too close to the trunk. With the exception of conifers, a tree's trunk tissue wraps around branches in a collar jutting out a few inches from the trunk; and cutting into that trunk tissue can eventually kill a tree. Clean cuts should be made just past the branch collar, with care being taken to first remove most of the weight of the branch so that the bark and cambium layer doesn't tear below that cut. Callus tissue will eventually form and completely cover a proper cut.

Also not discussed is maintenance of the defensible space. Pruning usually triggers the sprouting of new growth along the trunk, from the crown, and even from roots a distance from the plant. Repeat pruning is usually required to keep specimens nicely shaped and well limbed-up. If systemic herbicides are used extreme care must be taken not to inadvertently spray root sprouts connected to the leave-tree. The new foliage of root sprouts is often a different shape than the parent tree, so not always recognized as being part of that tree.

The Board's rulemaking process was determined to be categorically exempt from environmental documentation because there is no government permit or funding associated with the activity, and because significant impacts were deemed unlikely, as projects consist of minor alterations to vegetation and affect limited areas around existing homes and generally do not contain substantial areas of native habitats with valuable quantities of habitat components, cultural sites, or beneficial uses of water.

"Overstory forested canopies are expected to remain intact, with little to no change in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationship size and density classification."

Recommendations incorporated in the Guideline document include retaining limited down large woody debris to maintain and enhance wildlife values, and retaining screening to provide cover and shelter for wildlife. Overstory tree shade is expected to be retained so as to prevent much increase in

Ed's Printing

- We encourage the use of recycled papers
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- Paper sizes printed up to 18 x 24 in.

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Yahi Club Quarterly Program

By Gudrun Sweatt
Discovering Our Wilderness Heritage, Thursday, July 20, Chico Library, 7 PM

Using historic paintings and photographs, this locally produced multimedia presentation sketches the historical roots of our National Wilderness Preservation System and the vision of those who made it possible. The Wilderness Act of 1964 - the basis of our wilderness system - is examined, followed by a virtual tour of northern California roadless areas that are suitable for designation as wilderness. Some of the current challenges to the preservation of these areas will also be discussed.

The program is presented by the California Wilderness Legacy Project, a northern California based organization dedicated to preserving and protecting our wilderness through education and stewardship.

Contact person, Gudrun Sweatt, 894-3988.

YAH! Group Summer 2006 Outings

Weekly Power Walk (grade 2, class A). Meet at the Chico Park & Ride each Tuesday evening at 6:30PM for a 1 ½ hour brisk walk along the creek. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring water. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

On-Going Tuesday Volleyball. Join Yahi Group members and friends for friendly, co-ed volleyball every Tuesday night at 7PM at the Chapman Center (corner of E. 16th Street and B Street in Chico). Cost: \$4 per night. Free lessons included. For more information call Karen, 899-8305 or Betty, 345-7205.

May

May 27-29 - Mill Creek Memorial Day Backpack (grade 3, class B). Join the Yahi Group for our annual Memorial Day weekend trail maintenance trip. We will hike either 14-15 miles downstream starting at Upper Mill Creek (4000 feet) to Black Rock (2000 feet) or hike in 4-5 miles to camp before returning. On the way we hike through forests, enjoy wildflowers and follow along the creek. The Forest Service may provide tools and car shuttle back to our cars. Group size is limited, call for reservations. Return time around 6PM Monday. Leader: Tony, 916-448-3230; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

June

Thursday, June 1 - Paradise Lake Conditioning Bike ride. (Grade 1, Class A). Come enjoy a moderately paced 10 mile bike ride at beautiful Paradise Lake. Meander thru lush forest while enjoying the beauty of the placid lake. The ride is relatively flat, on a dirt road. Bring a mountain bike in good condition, water, money for drivers, helmets are required. Meet at Albertsons in Paradise at 6pm. For more information call Lynn, 864-7826.

Saturday, June 3 - Paradise Lake Walk (grade 2, Class A). Come enjoy the beauty and serenity of Paradise Lake. We will do a 9 mile round-trip hike on the dirt path which follows the indentations of the Lake. Meet at 9 AM at the Chico Park & Ride or at 9:45 AM at the Paradise Lake parking area. For driving directions contact the leader. Bring water lunch and comfortable shoes. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491.

Thursday, June 8 - Paradise Lake Conditioning Bike ride. (Grade 1, Class A). Come enjoy a moderately paced 10 mile bike ride at beautiful Paradise Lake. Meander thru lush forest while enjoying the beauty of the placid lake. The ride is relatively flat, on a dirt road. Bring a mountain bike in good condition, water, money for drivers, helmets are required. Meet at Albertsons in Paradise at 6pm. For more information call Lynn, 864-7826.

Thursday, June 15 - Paradise Lake Conditioning Bike ride. (Grade 1, Class A). Come enjoy a moderately paced 10 mile bike ride at beautiful Paradise Lake. Meander thru lush forest while enjoying the beauty of the placid lake. The ride is relatively flat, on a dirt road. Bring a mountain bike in good condition, water, money for drivers, helmets are required. Meet at Albertsons

in Paradise at 6pm. For more information call Lynn, 864-7826.

Friday-Sunday, June 23-25 - Point Reyes National Seashore Weekend (grade 1, class A). Come enjoy the ocean, wildlife and unique hostel experience at Pt. Reyes, northeast of San Francisco. Herds of elk, white deer, 200 species of birds, elephant seals and many other animals make this refuge their home. We'll walk or bike to the nearby ocean and enjoy the camaraderie of the hostel and the people who come from all over the world. We'll hike, kayak/canoe by day and have hostel fun (pot lucks and games, etc) in the evenings. Call for more information; space is limited. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader, Alan, 891-8789.

Saturday, June 24- Paradise Lake Bike Ride (Grade 1, Class A). Come enjoy a moderately paced 10 mile bike ride at beautiful Paradise Lake. Meander thru lush forest while enjoying the beauty of the placid lake and enjoying lunch on the shore. The ride is relatively flat, on a dirt road. Bring a mountain bike in good condition, lunch, plenty of water, money for drivers, helmets are required. Meet at Albertsons in Paradise at 9am. For more info call Lynn, 864-7826.

July

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.

Updates: Updated outings information can be found on our web site at www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/

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.

Outings and Events

Saturday, July 8 – Exotic Plant Eradication & Hike in Colby Meadows (grade 1, class A). We'll work on digging out verbascum thrapus and destroying the seed head. This plant is also known as wooley mullein. Three or four people should make for a short work day and leave time for a moderate hike. For more info, meeting place and time, call leader. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Saturday-Sunday, July 8-9 – Snow Mountain Backpack (grade 2, class B). We drive up to the trailhead on Saturday and backpack 2 ½ miles to Cedar Camp and set up our camp. From here we'll climb the final 3 miles to the top of 7000' Snow Mountain to enjoy the spectacular views across the Sacramento Valley and north toward Lassen and Shasta. Individual commissary. Please contact leader to reserve a space. Day hikers welcome. About a 200 mile round trip drive from Chico. Leader: Alan: 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net; Asst. Leader: Teresa, 899-7331.

Saturday-Sunday, July 15-16 – Clair Tappan Lodge and Day Hikes (grade 2, class 2). Join us for a wonderful weekend at the unique Clair Tappan Lodge (near Donner Summit, 2.4 miles off the Soda Springs/Norden I-80 exit). Saturday we'll hike to Castle Peak, Loch Leven Lakes or south on the Pacific Crest Trail depending on snow. Lodging

(dorms or rooms with only one bunk bed) and three great meals cost \$46 (\$5 more for non-Sierra Club members). Check www.sierraclub.org. Please bring sleeping bag, toiletries, towel, hiking boots, sunscreen, water, swimsuit (lakes/hot tub), lunch for Saturday and carpool and Lodge \$\$\$. Meet at 8AM at Chico Park & Ride or at the NW corner of the Oroville Wal-Mart parking lot at 8:35AM. Please contact leader for lodge reservations at least 10 days before trip. Leader: Julian, 893-1994; Asst. Leader, Alan, 891-8789.

Sunday-Friday, July 16-21 – Pacific Crest Trail Work Party. We are looking for 10 volunteers to help restore and preserve about 10 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail in the Plumas National Forest. This is a "car-camp" trip on Nelson Creek. We will be working north and south from that point along the PCT restoring tread, building water crossings and clearing trail. Plan to arrive Sunday July 16st for dinner and orientation and work Monday through Thursday (July 20), breaking camp and leaving Friday the 21st (participants can stay longer if they wish but must supply their own food). Food and tools are provided by the PCTA and the National Forest Service. A \$25.00 refundable deposit holds your spot. Contact leader for further information or to sign up. Leader: Larry Krumm, 408-270-4513 or Larry.Krumm@sccoe.org

Thursday, July 20 - Discovering Our Wilderness Heritage. Using historic paintings and photographs, this locally produced multimedia presentation sketches the historical roots of our National Wilderness Preservation System and the vision of those who made it possible. The Wilderness Act of 1964 - the basis of our wilderness system - is examined, followed by a virtual tour of northern California roadless areas that are suitable for designation as wilderness. Some of the current challenges to the preservation of these areas will also be discussed. 7-9 p.m. at Chico Public Library, corner of East First and Sherman Avenues, Chico. Contact: Goodie Sweatt, 894-3988.

Saturday, July 22 – Castle Crags Hike (grade 2, class B). A 6 mile round-trip hike with an elevation gain of 1950'. Enjoy breathtaking views of Castle Crags and Mt. Shasta on an excellent trail through pine/fir forest with a short side trip to lush Indian Springs. We'll eat lunch and relax among the Crags. Please wear boots and bring water, sunscreen, camera and carpool \$\$\$. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or call leader to arrange meeting place in Red Bluff. Leader: Julian, 893-1994.

Saturday-Sunday, July 22 - 23 - Saucer Lake Backpack (grade 1, class A) An easy three mile one way trip for families with children, beginners, and those who enjoy relaxing trips. A near wilderness experience near the shore of a wild and beautiful lake, just 50 miles from Chico. A great swimming lake with a beach and lots of wildflowers. We will travel at a pace all can follow. Bring proper backpacking equipment, food, water, insect repellent, sunscreen, and \$ for carpool. Individual commissary. Leave Chico at 8:30 AM on Saturday and return at 4:00 PM Sunday. Rain cancels. Contact leader, John, at (530) 872-8258 or hubbollister@yahoo.com.

Saturday, July 29 – Humbug to Humboldt Summit (grade 2, class B) Hike a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail above Butte Meadows. Elevation gain of 1000 feet, but the hike starts above 6000 feet and follows the ridge. It is a possible shuttle trip if we have enough high clearance vehicles. If we do not have the high clearance vehicles, we'll do the Humbug side of the trail and do an approximately 6 mile round trip. Bring lunch, lots of water, sunscreen and carpool \$\$\$. Call leaders for more information. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM. Leader: Betty, 345-7205; Asst. Leaders: Steve, 345-7205 and Jan/Kevin, 894-0438.

August

Wednesday-Sunday, August 2-6 – Yosemite National Park Backpack (grade 3, class D). A trip through the scenic high country of Yosemite from Tuolumne Meadows to Vogelsang, Merced Lake and Sunrise High Sierra Camps. Each day we will travel 7-8 miles and camp near each High Sierra Camp. Exit via the Cathedral Lakes trailhead. Individual commissary. Limited space. Call leader to reserve spot. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net

Saturday, August 5 – Brokeoff Mountain Day Hike (grade 2, class C). We'll join the Shasta Group for Lassen Park's best kept secret, the strenuous and scenic 7-mile trail up to Brokeoff Mountain. They'll be plenty of photo opportunities as we cross little creeks, hike along ponds, and pass through meadows full of flowers up to a great view of Mt. Lassen. Thunderstorm cancels. Bring lunch, water, carpool \$ and entrance fees. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Return time around 5-6PM. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491.

Saturday, August 12- Paradise Flume Hike- Come enjoy a hike along the flume in Paradise followed by a descent into a beautiful, refreshing swimming hole where we will enjoy lunch. Swimming is optional. Bring hiking shoes, money for drivers, a swim suit if desired. Meet at Albertsons in Paradise at 9am. For more info call Lynn, 864-7826.

Friday - Sunday, August 18 - 20 - Lassen Park Campout. This is a car camping trip with hikes on Saturday and Sunday. Camp site at Manzanita Lake or Lost Creek, near Manzanita. Day hikes will vary on grade and class with at least one 6 to 10 mile hike. All levels of hikers and camp lizards are welcome. Price will vary between \$10 and \$15 per person for the weekend depending on the number of campers. Individual commissary. Tents are recommended. Bring your own camping gear, sturdy boots, carpool \$, musical instruments. Campsite available Friday afternoon. Contact leader, John, at (530) 872-8258 or hubbollister@yahoo.com.

Thursday, August 24 – 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-Sunday, August 25-27 – Juniper

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

Class C: 2000-3000 feet

An Open Letter to DFG: Davis Lake Pike Eradication

1. If ecological safety is one of the five main concerns, why has it taken eight years to produce a summary monitoring micro and macro flora and fauna changes? I hope the summary will include pre-rotenone poisoning control data for comparison. It is inconceivable to me that the Department of Fish & Game (DFG) is at the cusp of recommending a second rotenone treatment prior to making this information available for analysis. Rotenone treatments are represented by DFG as fairly benign to the environment, and they very well may be, but it would be nice if the rest of us could gain that same comfort level prior to treating the lake for a second time. We at the Sierra Club are very concerned about poisons being introduced into our waterways, especially as to how they affect the non-target species. Please provide this information at your earliest convenience so we all can be satisfied and move forward with you. The process needs to be transparent.

Also in the May 2004 DFG report, sec. 3.1.5 on Ecological Impact, it was stated that any treatment should have short-term environmental effects, and the eradication agent should be highly selective and have low persistence in the environment. The upcoming report should document this. Please provide other examples of lakes with similar characteristics that have been treated with rotenone resulting in minimal environmental impacts. Are there situations where the environmental impacts of such a poisoning was determined to be moderate to extreme?

2. Have any threatened, endangered or species of concern been identified at Lake Davis? Please identify them if they are known to exist. If not, does this mean that they don't exist or just haven't been searched for?

3. A question was asked at the meeting (19 January 06) regarding the mutual adaptation of pike and Salmonids in the Great Lakes area, relative to our problem. Even if the Salmonids of the West did in time evolve/adapt to the presence of pike, we are dealing with yet another situation of man fooling around with the natural biogeography of our plants and animals. Granted, Lake Davis is a man-made reservoir, but rainbow trout (especially the Eagle Lake strain) are native to the area and pike are not.

4. I'm not a proponent of the "if one dose is

good then two doses are twice as good" philosophy, but some experts are adamant that more than one application is advisable. On the phone and later at the meeting, Ed Pert explained that others feel a second application using the same technique will achieve no more than a single application. I hope that final choice doesn't come down to convenience and politics, and that science and actual experience are the ultimate determiners of this important consideration. Also, have you considered more than one application if different techniques could be used (e.g., Finnish and conventional)? I also hope the same kind of thinking goes into choosing the amount of drawdown. Ultimately, the highest probability of success should govern the decision making. Last time it appears to have been done in haste due to pressure from several sources, e.g., Portola and fishermen. This time let's make the extra effort to get it right irrespective of outside pressures.

5. What are DFG's plans regarding signage and education to prevent restocking of pike? If someone is determined to replant after the treatment, I suppose it would be extremely difficult (approaching impossible) to prevent it or to catch the culprits. However, an education program might at least raise the bar for those who might be intimidated by the fines/penalties if caught. If not already completed, a DNA analysis should be done of the current pike population.

6. I'm surprised that the current screens at the outlets have openings large enough to allow small pike through. I'm aware that the young fish prefer the top water strata, and the force of the water exiting the outlet would probably crush any escaping pike against the concrete pen, but I think it foolish to take such chances. The outlets will eventually have to be retrofitted in some way to ensure containment. The time to do that is now.

7. What is planned for the city of Portola with regard to the following items:

- filtering existing wells and/or distribution of bottled water?
- financial reimbursements for loss of business? method of determined loss?
- gaining their support for the process?

8. Has the following method of pike eradication been considered, and does it have merit?

- drain the lake entirely using pumps as necessary to achieve a complete drawdown
- treat the remaining streams with a combination of eradication techniques:
 - rotenone drip system over a sustained period
 - electroshock multiple times
 - seine multiple times

This method is obviously more labor intensive, but how do you think it ranks relative to

Pacific Crest Trail Association Service Trip

Ten volunteers are needed to work on a section of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) in the Plumas National Forest July 16th—20th (the 20th is an optional day). Tools and food will be provided.

A \$25 deposit is required to save your spot. It will be refunded to you when you arrive Sunday to set up camp. Dinner will be provided Sunday evening.

For details, call or e-mail:

Larry Krumm at 408-270-4513, 2558 Cypress

Second Annual Save the Clair Tappaan Experience

The Second Annual "Save the Clair Tappaan Experience" fundraiser will be held at the lodge Friday – Sunday, August 11 – 13, 2006.

This event-packed weekend will begin Friday night with a moonlight hike and movies in the dining room. We will be able to sit comfortably in the new dining room chairs!

On Saturday, after breakfast there will be a choice of hikes of varying difficulty and theme hikes including a Bird Watch Hike, a Local History Hike and a Geology Hike. There also will be mountain bike rides.

The Saturday afternoon wine and cheese reception will be in the backyard of the lodge. A highlight of last year's event was the silent auction during this reception. Local merchants and individuals contributed many wonderful gifts and we plan to repeat that this year.

The evening will feature a slide show on the history of CTL in the dining room, live music in the living room and sharing of adventures around the campfire outside.

Sunday morning there will be a choice of a bike ride or hikes, and we will end this wonderful weekend with an early afternoon barbeque.

There will be a variety of packages available with varying prices: 2-night stay, 1-night stay, and day only. The bulk of the fees will go to support the lodge.

Steve Miller
Broker



Miller Real Estate

Sales – Appraisals
Chico, CA
530-345-6061

email: steveinchico@accessbee.com

The Conservation Forum

Girl Scouts and Beaver

A news report from Anchorage, Alaska, 2003, told of Alaskan Girl Scouts working on a project of trapping excess beaver under the state-run "Take a Kid Trapping" program aimed at controlling damage from an increasing number of beaver along the lower Chena River.

Beavers are cute. They have soft fur and look like a round roly-poly, and are often depicted in comic strips with their buck teeth and plump shape. No wonder they bring forth emotion when there is a plan to reduce their numbers. You have to love beaver and other wildlife. Animals are so alive, predictable, and dedicated to what they do. The beaver HAS to live in water and chew trees for a living (orders from the Top Designer), but they are not particular as to what lovely tree they chew! They took down two lovely trees along the Feather River at Oroville, a maple and a cottonwood. If I had a trap and the legality, I might go down and trap a few myself, because in general, they are over-populated in those protected waters.

What I just said, and what the Alaskan Girl Scouts are doing, may shock nature-lovers, who probably consider me, a naturalist writer, and girl scouts, oath takers, as being so humane that we wouldn't even think of trapping an animal. The truth of the matter is I have done a lot of trapping on the Missouri farm when I was a boy. It was part of the farm process to hunt, trap, fish, as well as to butcher hogs and kill rabbits in the shuffle to make a living and eat. Admittedly, my hunting cousins, friends, and neighbors considered it a man's game, and to think of a girl scout mucking in the mud for beaver, or in our rural Missouri case, muskrats, never even crossed our minds.

The Alaskan Girl Scout project has angered animal rights activists, even though the girls are killing the beaver as part of a state flood-management program where the over-populated rodents have caused excess environmental damage with their dams and tree chewing. A spokesman for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) said, "We think it sends a very, very bad message that when animals cause a problem you kill them. The Girl Scouts should want girls to become 'stewards of wildlife,' not abusers."

Officials at the Girl Scout New York headquarters responded that they did not promote trapping or hunting and do not offer merit badges for those activities. But Alaskan Girl Scouts are located in a land where trapping has been a traditional occupation, and trapper Mike McDougall, who has been helping the girls said, "PETA doesn't have a concept that trapping is considered a heritage here in Alaska and those kids are learning more than just how to take an animal. They're learning about ecology. They also get a definite sense of respect for the animals." There is no doubt that a hands-on activity is a great teacher, and much of my woods lore came from attending the

trapline and watching nature at work, even though these days I have learned to watch without traps.

The ten Alaskan Girl Scouts were determined to continue using snares and lethal traps to eventually catch ten beaver, skin them, tan the pelts, and make hats and mittens from the fur. They also cooked beaver meat. They had the legal backing and encouragement of the state Department of Fish and Game, and troop leader Dona Boylan said she wanted to impart lessons in responsible game management. "Trapping may not be pretty, but the girls understand the seriousness and huge responsibility of taking a life. They understand that when humans affect their environment, they become ultimately responsible for maintaining a healthy population of the animals they have to coexist with in these urban centers."

So there you have it; to trap or not to trap. In California, it is "not-trap" as animal rights groups worked to prod legislators to pass a law prohibiting the use of steel-jawed traps, the most efficient way to trap an animal. Even government trappers who use their skills to catch rogue coyotes and problem muskrats are ham-strung. It is good to care about the suffering and the environmental perils of animals, but some things just go overboard with impractical excesses. The PETA mentality once extended into saving the kangaroos in Australia by having their imported hides banned from entry into California. The kangaroos were declining at that time, but since then they have rebounded by the millions and the Australian government actually sponsors mass killing to save the crops. But that hide law still exists on California books and Cabela's can't send kangaroo-hide products into the state...and my kangaroo-skin boots are worn out, and I need another set of those soft, flexible, light-weight wonders. Is it sensible to ban a product made from something not imperiled? What happened to the word "conservation?"

I wonder how the highway workers felt about the beavers at the beaver pond that impeded progress on the rebuilding of the highway 70 and 149 interchange? I noticed workers once cut open their dam, but the industrious rodents bridged the gap. A new pond has been provided for them, which is a nice gesture.

Maybe it takes some living on the farm to get use to the fact that we kill animals to eat. We kill vegetables that we eat. You can't eat without being involved in killing. To the caretaker of a soft cuddly rabbit, or the guardian of a animal rehabilitation center, killing and trapping are cruel words. International Bird Rescue members, who work gallantly to save an oil-smear duck or an impaired sea otter would never think of eating those animals, and they sometimes cry when their subjects die from injuries. Compassion is always a good word, but

The Fleecing of the Land

My son Ben, who lives in San Leandro, CA, reported that he took his family to Moss Beach in mid-February, 2006. Moss Beach near Half Moon Bay has one of the best tidepool areas along the coast...or at least it once did. When it was rich in sea-life in the early 1960's, you could find fascinating animals and plants among the mossy-looking rocks when the tide receded...but then the urchin and abalone hunters stripped the pools before protective laws were established.

Sea urchins were literally wiped out by Mexican meat hunters, as they, and various mollusks, were used in soup pots. When I was there to photograph the pools, I would see families leaving with gunny sacks full of urchins and mollusks. As in many cases of natural resource use, greed takes over until hardly anything is left. When a wild commodity is plentiful and unregulated by law (or needed for short-term gains to patch up a war-racked economy), often little thought is given to conservation and future availability.

As a tribute to the flexibility of nature, if allowed time and protection to recover, Ben says that now the tidepools seem to be in good shape. There is an interpretive center to inform the public about the fragile edge of the sea zone, signs posted prohibiting collecting, and a park ranger who patrols the beach on foot, actively engaging people on interpretive subjects as well as enforcement of the rules. The extent of environmental ignorance knows no bounds in the realm of those who would fleece the land, and often it takes a physical presence to intercede.

I am appalled at how low a natural resource can sink before conservation sinks in, and sometimes it is too late; witness the stripping of trees from much of Europe—and the Philippines!—and places in America that will never have the same kind of old growth forest, even though trees can recover in time. The passenger pigeons and the dodo birds...gone forever...and many other species on the brink.

In 1953, bird artist Roger Tory Peterson and English naturalist James Fisher made a 30,000 mile trip in America examining birds and the environment, explained in their book, "Wild America." Fifty years later, author Scott Weidensaul retraced that journey as described in his book, "Return to Wild America." The account is also a habitat review in which Scott details some alarming losses of open space.

As a naturalist is prone to do, Scott is especially aware of environmental losses near his home state of Pennsylvania ("Think globally, act locally"). The first part of his trip shows the urbanized footprint that jumped to 47 percent by 1997, "one of the nation's most radical patterns of sprawl and urban abandonment." At that time, the state lost a million acres of land to development, mostly farm and forest habitat, while its road system, already more than 120,000

The Conservation Forum

Wild Animal Homes

By Rex Burress

According to a newspaper article, a citizen's request for a permit to keep seven orangutans in backyard confinement at Ridgecrest, CA, has set off neighborhood protest. The process has been delayed because CA Fish and Game inspectors found 28 snapping turtles and two gila monsters illegally in the man's possession!

Why do people want wild animals in their homes? It was stated that Californians own about 250,000 so-called exotic animals, ranging from hedgehogs and ferrets to cobras, lions, tigers, bears, and elephants among those reported, according to Fish and Game. Some would say that it is a form of slavery and denial of freedom to thus alter a wild animal's home life and keep it in confinement, although zoo officials and even farmers and home owners might contest that idea.

Some animals that were originally wild have been domesticated to keep on farms such as cattle, horses, sheep, and chickens, part of a lengthy list of controlled creatures. Even the canaries that seemingly are joyous in their cages are a prime example of a caged animal. My grandmother made a business of raising the singers, and cages of yellow canaries filled her living room. I suspect the thought of any injustice being done never crossed her mind as it has been common practice to raise various animals for profit down through the ages. Nearly all of the meat at the grocery store has descended from what was originally wild animals.

Don't even mention dogs and cats that have been thoroughly diffused into society to the point their food consumption approaches that of mankind!

The public zoo concept has been debated and bantered about continually, some seeing an educational benefit in exhibiting wild creatures most people would never be able to see in their natural habitats, and others contending it is cruel and unusual punishment to hold an animal in confinement. I have been involved in wild animal interpretation AND a wild animal zoo. Various animals were retained for visual enlightenment of a live animal as part

of an environmental education program I worked with at Oakland, CA's, Rotary Nature Center, so I've seen both sides of the issue.

We cared for many badgers, porcupines, ringtails, skunks, raccoons, opossums and other animals, often until a particular animal recovered from some deficiency and was later released, but more commonly they became dependent on their daily food and actually preferred the security of a cage. Many became tolerant if not friendly toward the human visitors who enjoyed their beauty. Their usage in nature program presentations was invaluable, since there is nothing like a live animal to capture one's interest.

The trained staff could adeptly handle skunks, possums, armadillos, and even porcupines! Hawks, owls, eagles and vultures could be perched on the gloved hand for a thrilling bit of show and tell, not to mention the myriad of tarantulas, insects, snakes and rodents that were fully adaptable to being handled. They seemed to grow fond of the experience, and certainly their appetites flourished. That is not to say captivity was the best choice, as there is nothing like natural habitat, but sometimes something alters a creature's life or they serve an educational purpose which is a small sacrifice when a child, or a grandpa, can be amazed by the close-up wonder of life. Instruction can bridge the gap of understanding about natural and artificial surroundings. Plus, there were considerable photographic opportunities and subjects for artists.

However...certain animal activists objected to the confinement of the caged animals, and the city finally concurred and removed most of the cages. Presently, only a small collection of snakes are housed behind the scenes in the Center, and mostly domestic animals substitute for that direct approach experience.

The case of a full-fledged zoo is perhaps more controversial. To reduce an elephant's range to a small compound is a faint substitute for vast savannas and open space, a condition that once existed at the

Oakland Zoo. They now have a larger outdoor area, but a zoo keeper was killed by one of those old elephants that had been severely restricted. Being of a natural inclination, I do feel a pang of pity at the sight of the controlled life in a major zoo. But then again, I've never been to Africa to see the real thing, so a zoo somewhat substitutes for the wild animal experience.

I do know that various people have a compulsion to keep wild animals in their possession. This is especially tragic in the case of roadside zoos that often expose animals to cramped and unsanitary conditions, but the allure of wild animals is there to attract business. Only the ultra-motivated seem to notice the undesirable side of the issue.

While working at the Rotary Nature Center in Oakland, I was constantly amazed at the wild animal manipulation around the city. Escaped exotic animals were constantly being chased by Animal Control or dropped off at the Nature Center which features a Duck Pond, and people's unwanted waterfowl pets become a major "round-them-up-and-find-a-home-for-them" problem. Individuals would parade into our midst with bobcats riding on their shoulders, or leading ocelots and mountain lions. There was a bicyclist who had a parrot riding on the handlebars. People like to show off their pets and their training skills. There have been monkeys loose in the park, not to mention a rapid succession of exotic birds, even valuable cockatoos and macaw parrots. A Harpy Eagle from Central America was found loose in the city, as well as rattlesnakes and gila monsters. Ferrets are prized gentle mink-like creatures, but on the loose, they will kill anything they can sink their teeth into. Thus there is a considerable list of banned animals in California that the Fish and Game Department tries to patrol.

Not only animals, but rare, exotic, and sometimes invasive plants dot the city if not the entire state. The proliferation is a major concern of groups like the California Native Plant Society, and various prolific foreign weeds are a constant contention in agricultural projects.

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Angkor: An Ancient Environmental Catastrophe

By Joseph Abbott, jabbottmd@mindspring.com

A visit to the stunning World Heritage site of Angkor, that mysterious deserted jungle "city of temples" in Cambodia, sends an ecological message to Californians. Angkor's highly engineered water system once made this medieval city-state wealthy and powerful, but environmental blunders doomed it to collapse. In 600 years, Angkor's man-made paradise ascended and then failed because initial agricultural successes backfired.

This past November my wife and I visited Southeast Asia. We were captivated by the myriad of gigantic temples, jungle ambiance, and the intricate complex of reservoirs and waterways of the extensive Angkor complex.

Starting in the ninth century CE and extending into the 15th, massive "pick and shovel" engineering projects diverted water from nearby rivers into canals, catchments, and irrigation ditches. Removal of jungle for rice fields and controlled irrigation allowed intensive agriculture because a constant water supply extended the growing season into a year-round operation, no longer limited to monsoon months. Agricultural surpluses developed an export economy that eventually meant extreme wealth and power, including military dominance, for the fortunate Khmer people of the Angkor city-state.

Angkor's population of a million was ruled by the wealthy elite who built hundreds of aggrandizing temples, some beautiful and others bizarre, all surrounded by walls, moats, and embankments, scattered over 200 square miles or five times the size of New York's Manhattan. This multitude of temples were long reclaimed by jungle when Portuguese explorers "discovered" the deserted site, and the complex gained world attention when French archaeologists detailed their extravagances in the 1860s. But no one could explain Angkor's abandonment until recent scientific investigation found environmental answers.

The Greater Angkor Project (GAP) <http://acl.arts.usyd.edu.au/angkor/gap/>, a five-year program funded by the Australian Research Council, asserts that Angkor's infrastructure complexities, environmental degradation, and changes in rainfall all contributed to the demise of this grandest of cities of the pre-industrialized world. Apparently, the monsoon rains of winter shifted away as the world entered the little Ice Age, and the City's diversion system failed to deliver adequate summertime water, thus limiting food production in the face of an



The famous temple of Angkor Wat. Angkor with its ponds, reservoirs, and intricate canal system sustained a city-state of a million before it collapsed

expanding population - a volatile environmental-economic witches' brew that eventually bred no good.

The engineering marvels of Angkor's irrigation systems, akin to our Central Valley Water

The Fleecing of the Land

(continued from page 9)

miles long, grew by another 3,000 miles of paved

(continued on page 11)

highway. That is wildlife habitat...and places where crops can grow and people can find open space.

In the 48 contiguous states between 1982 and 1997, housing development and road structure increased by 25 million acres, meaning that a quarter of all the open land lost since European settlement disappeared in just 15 years! You can imagine what is happening around California's largest cities.

All of this means that the parks and protected lands we have acquired since Teddy Roosevelt set the trend are all the more precious to us today. Yet..."It is both an irony and an obscenity," Scott wrote, "that against this historic arc of progress we're now confronting the most environmentally hostile administration and Congress in generations, which have made dismantling those fundamental environmental safeguards a national priority—though they window-dress their actions with claims of streamlining bureaucracy or 'balancing' the needs of nature and commerce. Because most Americans, regardless of their political views, consider the environment an important issue, few of these battles have been waged openly, but existing laws subtly eviscerated, as was the National Forest Management Act of 1976, per that rule change in 2004."

Project, produced an agricultural juggernaut that ultimately failed because of bad plumbing, drought, and overpopulation. Manipulating water systems to feed diversions increased stream velocities which scoured river bottoms, deepening them so diversions were left high and dry. Constant clearing of jungle for rice paddies led to more erosion that ultimately silted canals and reservoirs, and clogged irrigation ditches. And drought, driven in part by population growth and extensive deforestation, exacerbated it all.

Angkor's story sends a message to Californians. Unbridled population growth, displacement of farms with grandiose homes, environmental damage to streams, rivers and forests, aging dams and water diversions, combined with little evidence-based political decision-making, and weather changes from global warming, should inspire Californians to make sound ecological and political choices this election season.

[My thanks to Alice Abbott for her editing and editorial suggestions.]

Take some heart, however, because as Scott noted, the National Wildlife Refuge System has increased to 93 million acres, and the federal wilderness system, which didn't even exist until 1964, now encompasses more than 106 million acres. Can we retain it? Those remote wilderness areas are small comfort, other than the mental reassurance that open space exists, to residents of suburban arenas who benefit from small park spaces close to home. Look, therefore, with appreciative eyes, toward the East Bay Regional Parks, Bidwell Park, Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland, and similar accessible places where one can "play in and pray in, where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike."

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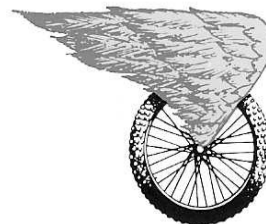
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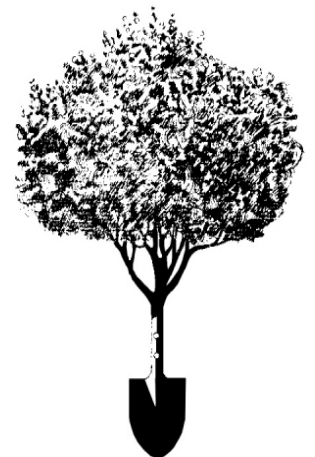
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