



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

Table of Contents:	
Is Hydrolic Fracturing Good for You?	1
Yahi Club News	2
Yahi Conservation Report	3
Rex Burress Awarded John Muir Award	5
The River Watcher	6.7
Yahi Contacts	9
Newsletter Sponsors	10

**Yahi Summer 2016
Outings and Events**

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza

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

Is Hydraulic Fracturing Good For You?

By David Garcia, Frack Free Butte County Spokesperson

Water is Butte County’s most valuable resource. Water is not only a basic human necessity, it is the life blood of our agriculture, tourism and food industry. Our future and prosperity depend on clean fresh water, and that is why over 10,000 people signed our petition to ban hydraulic fracturing (FRACKING) in Butte County. Citizens of Butte County will have the opportunity to vote on the issue as **Measure E** in the June 6, 2016 election.

Measure E lets people decide their future, not outside corporations.

There are over 200 inactive gas wells in Butte County that will be targeted for fracking when it becomes economically feasible.

Wells have been fracked in Sutter, Colusa, and Glenn Counties.

Fracking endangers our water, health, jobs and way of life.

Measure E protects our water.

It bans fracking in Butte County

It keeps toxic carcinogenic frack fluid out of gas wells where it can migrate and contaminate our ground and surface water.

It stops the use of thousands of gallons of water for fracking, in droughts.

Measure E protects our health and safety

Toxic chemicals used in fracking can cause cancer, birth defects, infertility and other severe health problems. Children and the elderly are especially at risk from fracking air pollutants which can cause asthma and other respiratory ailments.

Fracking and wastewater injection wells can trigger earthquakes. There are faults near Oroville Dam and its breach would be devastating!

Measure E protects our water which is essential to Butte County's;

Agriculture, our number one industry, valued at over \$869 million.

Tourism, which includes ag-tourism, boating, fishing, hunting, and birding.

Food industry, our breweries, wineries, and organic farms which depend on safe clean fresh water.

Protect our water, our health and our economy ...

Vote YES on Measure E

Yahi Club News

Volunteer Needed

By Suzette Welch



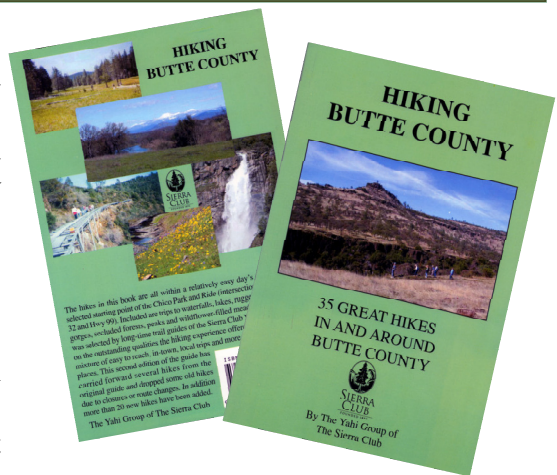
The Yahi Group is looking for a person, or several people who would take on the project of tabling for the club. Work would include working on and updating the display board and storing the board, seek out opportunities where the club could be represented with a table, sign up for events, enlist volunteers to represent club at the table.

Please contact me if you are interested in doing this. We already have a display board and will give you lots of help in getting started. Suzette Welch booksontape@rocketmail.com. 342-9214.

Hiking Butte County

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

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



The Conservation Goals of California's Sierra Club

By Grace Maria Marvin, Yahi Group Conservation Chair

As I am writing this, the club is celebrating the impending success of long time efforts to remove the Klamath Dam; locally, we are working to get voters to approve Measure E on the June ballot. It would ban fracking in Butte County-- an issue which we discussed often in this paper. What's new is that the Mother Lode Chapter is endorsing our measure on the ballot. And we are hoping that it won't be long until Sierra Club-California will come out against fracking for the whole state. The Sierra Club determined that because Butte County's economy is so dependent on water, we should be supported in our educational efforts, along with many others, to prevent fracking. Now we are even allowed to pursue our political agenda despite a lack of national SC policy on fracking.

As Delegate (and Alternate in prior years) to the quarterly meetings of the CNRCC (California-Nevada Regional Conservation Committee) meetings, SC members from all over the state come together to formulate and vote on positions bearing on club conservation resolutions and other topics. These can range from internal club policies to statewide political matters. The staff of SC-CA (Sierra Club California), which meets with the CNRCC, represents our 13 CA chapters to promote our goals through lobbying and other efforts in Sacramento. At the combined meetings, held twice a year at El Chorro Ranch in San Luis Obispo, we get to discuss issues in person. At other times, many of us confer over statewide conference calls.

RESOLUTIONS

The April 30-May 1, 2016, meeting in San Luis Obispo included a resolution we developed calling for the Sierra Club (with the help of our SC water experts) to develop or update policies on Indirect and Direct Potable Reuse of Water – not a sexy sounding topic. As a member of the Water committee, I nonetheless see this as an especially important topic, The (Los) Angeles chapter wants the club to formulate effective policies regarding RE-USE of LOCAL water. As we are in a drought, many club members want to encourage southern California to further promote their conservation efforts and not depend on water from the north state. We, in the north, after all, are also feeling the effects of the drought, despite our better luck with El Nino rains this past winter. (They did not fall on the south state!)

Related to this resolution are the following abbreviated/ partial definitions from our document: **Direct potable reuse** refers to the practice of treating municipal wastewater to drinking water standards.

Indirect potable reuse refers to the practice of storing highly treated wastewater for a period of time in a groundwater basin or in a surface water reservoir where it is blended with the raw water source and retreated in the municipal facility for drinking water. It can also refer to spreading treated wastewater in spreading basins where it slowly percolates through hundreds of feet of soil and rocks before entering a groundwater basin, or release into a river where it is later removed for treatment as drinking water.

We specified that the policies must be **sensitive to environmental issues and health concerns.**

Other major resolutions included: (1) Students in California must learn about causes and ramifications of climate change in high school, since climate crises are already happening and projected to become much worse-- unless strong local, governmental, corporate, and worldwide measures are adopted. (2) The Sierra Club wants to influence when and where large renewable projects can or cannot be sited in environmentally sensitive locations, and (3) the Club determined when state parking fees should be charged on state beaches.

MORE SPECIFIC GOALS OF SIERRA CLUB-CA (SC-CA)

Last year, SC-CA reported on their major efforts/ achievements-- several of which *continue to shape this year's goals*. Please note I have listed a very few of the examples of the goals below. In 2015, the goals included:

- 1-fighting the oil industry's pollution and their) efforts to control California's political system, *e.g.*, challenging oil industry's waste disposal practices;
- 2-pushing clean energy and energy efficiency, *e.g.*, Senate bill 350 passed;
- 3-promoting clean water and smart water policy, *e.g.*, defending new groundwater laws, fighting the twin tunnels, and increasing community self-reliance on water, and reducing damage to bays, stream, and rivers.
- 4-protecting wildlife and people from waste and toxics, *e.g.*, fighting plastic bags and and nano beads, protecting people from exposure to chemical toxics, and ensuring marijuana growing does not harm water and wildlife.
- 5-safeguarding California's coast, *e.g.*, urging the government to establish a National Marine life Sanctuary for the coast of San Luis Obispo (maybe under Obama during this his last year as president?)
- 6- advocating fundamental environmental safeguards, *e.g.*, *to prevent* weakening of the California Environmental Quality Act, while increasing environmental protection for disadvantaged communities.

Additional goals for 2016 include a variety of legislative priorities involving 1-tackling methane pollution to reduce climate change, 2-restoring the integrity of the California Coastal commission, 3-advancing renewable energy, 4-protecting California's wildlife, natural areas and parks, 5-reigning in polluting oil extraction and cutting oil dependence, 6-regulating dangerous pesticides, and 7-rebooting California's water system for sustainability. (See www.sierraclub.org/california for more information.)

We also discussed LeConte Lodge. We decided to keep working to continue the Sierra Club's presence in this newly named Yosemite Conservation Heritage Center. (*Google* the sad but interesting story behind the name change.) National Sierra Club wants club members to raise \$2 million in two years to go toward an endowment fund for the center. If we do not do so, the Sierra Club would have to relinquish control, and Yosemite Park would no longer allow our club to staff it. At our joint CNRCC and SC-CA meeting, we expressed strong interest in having this center continue to be run by the Sierra Club, since it is such a wonderful introduction to John Muir and to reasons for having a Sierra Club at all! (So, let's get money for it!)

Other Topics included:

It is critical to to empower women by providing them easy access to birth control worldwide. Their greater choice regarding birth control would also help reduce the current and ever increasing growth of population on our planet-- harming both humans and nature. The US should not be so far behind the eight ball as it is now in promoting women's choice – in the U.S. and globally.

At the meeting , we supported the development of an Agricultural Committee as part of the CNRCC. This committee could address a range of sustainability issues, including healthier fertilizers and pesticides, desertification and poor soil practices, methane emissions from cattle, cover crops, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's), and other farming topics.

We also discussed wetlands, wildlife, the Arcadian Power scam, efforts by National Sierra Club to save money by consolidating chapters (very alarming and detrimental in our combined opinions), political endorsements, new Internet applications for the club, and the need to pursue **Diversity** (age, race, sex, etc.), **Inclusion** (making all feel welcome), and **Equality** among staff and membership. Our club sorely needs younger members to keep our club's goals of *enjoyment, exploration, and protection of the environment* going for our future and theirs.

Rex Burress Receives Conservation Legacy Award



Oroville naturalist and newspaper columnist Rex Burress was awarded a Conservation Legacy Award by the John Muir Association, at a celebration of Muir's 178th birthday and the 46th anniversary of Earth Day.

A lifelong conservationist, John Muir was Rex Burress' inspiration. Rex's mission became "to entice others to look at nature's loveliness with understanding" through nature walks, writings and art. Rex worked as Refuge Naturalist/Bird Keeper/Program Facilitator at the Lake Merritt Wildlife Refuge/Rotary Nature Center until 1993.

Retiring to Oroville, Rex continues to give nature walks and programs, write nature columns and pursue his art. He authored and illustrated two books, *Of a Feather* and *Life On No Creek*. A gifted wildlife artist, he also painted a portrait of John Muir, which hangs in a Green Bay, Wisconsin, museum. *From the John Muir Association Web site: <http://www.johnmuirassociation.org/php/conserv-award.php>

There is an extensive section of Rex's essays in a section called The River Watcher on the Yahi Website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yahi/river-watcher>

River Watcher:

What is Conservation?

By Rex Burress



"I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in...Going to the woods is going home."

John Muir, Born April 21, 1838.

Although the term "conservation" was quite apparent on April 23, 2016, at the John Muir National Historic Site, a day when the John Muir Conservation Legacy award was given out [to me], I'm not sure if everybody knew, or knows, what conservation means.

You need but go to the Webster's Dictionary, or Wikipedia on Google, to get the general definition of conservation, even though words like conservative, conservancy, preservationist, environmentalist, ecologist, and sustainability clamor to be recognized.

Conservative politics aside, conservation, as in nature conservation, is the action of conserving, or saving something [save the whales], preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment. A certain amount of love is involved in seeking the proper use and protection of our natural resources including animal and plant life, especially those features that are non-renewable.

Californians became very aware of the term 'water conservation' during the drought of 2015. Drastic conserving is needed when ponds and wells sink low. The wise use of anything at any time is a good policy.

Conservation is an ethic of resource use, allocation, and protection while maintaining the health of the natural world. Conservation seeks the proper use of nature, while preservation seeks complete protection of nature from use.

Was John Muir a conservationist or preservationist? The two words are somewhat akin, although preservation emphasizes retaining nature without disturbance, while conservation is more toward the wise use of existing resources while saving enough for the future. Muir may have been more toward preserving, as in saving land for National Parks, although he certainly knew about conservation on the Wisconsin farm as a boy, and later at the Martinez ranch where he efficiently sorted saplings and fruit crops. It is said that the man who prunes his own fruit trees knows the true meaning of conservation.

In a nature interpreter job interview many years ago, Josh Barkin asked me what I thought about conservation versus preservation. Although I was well acquainted with the word conservation, I had given little thought to preservation, and I rather messed up on my answer. I was thinking primarily about my mother preserving foods in a pressure-cooker! Preservation of peach-jam in a jar is meant to be used and not to be set aside to remain untouched, as in wilderness preservation. The duo use of the term got me in an interview jam! I did OK in the field test, though, when asked what kind of bird nest was in the oak. I had seen enough fox squirrel nests in Missouri to know it was squirrel and not bird!

As a nature-loving boy I was a volunteer for the local conservation agent, or game warden, took care of confiscated animals, and went on patrols with him. Agent Sid got me started in the Nature Knight program sponsored by the MO Dept. of Conservation, and I was flooded with field guide books at a time when I could memorize efficiently.

One of my projects was making a refuge out of a brushy corner in the lespedeza field next to Floyd's Timber. Setting aside little pieces of farmland for wildlife is good conservation. I was a conservationist all the way from tending my Corner to the Missouri Conservationist magazine!

Conservation is also: Attempting to put a baby bird back in its nest [as happened at Oakland Camp when a dozen seniors worked for an hour lifting a wood pewee home on a long pole]; braking for an animal crossing the road [even a snake and especially gray squirrels around Oroville]; helping trapped ducklings out of the gutter [it's the attitude and gesture that counts]; leaving a patch of flowers in the mowed field ["A Tuft of Flowers" by Robert Frost]; tending bird and bat houses; admiring roadside chicory even though it's a non-native species; respecting endangered life; supporting conservation causes; or going on a nature walk!

"Any fool can destroy trees. They cannot run away; and if they could, they would still be destroyed, chased, and hunted down as long as fun or a dollar could be got out of their bark hides, branching horns, or magnificent bole backbones." --John Muir

"In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught." --Baba Dioum

River Watcher:

Chase Time

By Rex Burress

Something darted across the road as I approached the Feather River Nature Center. At first, I thought it was a big house cat, but back in the brush a gray fox nervously watched me before running back across the road--with a scrub jay in hot pursuit!

Spring chase time, I thought, when everything is actively engaged in building a bungalow and defending it like some kind of special supermarket sale was at stake. Birds are the most obvious defenders of their nesting sites, but beware of mother bears and false black widow spiders, too!

I added the spider item, because once I was smashing baby spiders on the Nature Center desk, when mother false black widow, alias *Steatoda grossa*, dashed out and bit me on the wrist! "Take that, you baby killer," she must have mumbled in spider talk! That hurt, for a couple weeks, but I lived. See her remains in a Center jar. Shame; bug-bombed for merely defending her hatchlings.

The scrub jay undoubtedly had a nest or fledglings in the area and even a fox will get bird-bombed by protective parents. During April and May during peak production, you can see objective behavior all along the river. Blackbirds are the fussiest defenders, dive-bombing nearly anything near their nest. Red-wing blackbirds along the river are noisy defenders,

erupting in squawks if you're anywhere near the cleverly woven nests in the cattails. They are communal birds, like the acorn woodpeckers, and gang up on an invader.

Brewer's blackbirds are even more aggressive, and a hat-less person is in danger of having some hair removed! I trust they still nest in the bishop pines outside the Rotary Nature Center/ Lake Merritt Wildlife Refuge in Oakland, CA and pick a person to strike...to the amusement of the staff.

Among the fierce defenders are the western kingbirds, ready to do aerial combat with any bird of prey that flies over their nesting territory. Even hummingbirds will attack an eagle flying over, and some have been reported as landing on the giant's head to annoy the raptor--but what eagle would stoop to eat a marble-sized infant?

So it's a spring-time sky-show to see the nest defenders harassing aerial intruders. Black crows get swarmed from blackbirds although crows gang up in large "murders" during the winter to attack hawks and owls. A group of starlings, or 'murmuration,' would seem to fit in the aggressive bird category, but those abundant dark birds are quite docile.

The entire Corvidae family, that includes crows, jays and magpies, are rather cantankerous birds prone to raid other bird nests. Ironically, a pair of scrub jays nested in our backyard plum tree one year, and some crows marched around the lawn pretending to watch for worms, but all the time keeping an eye on the jay. Those thieving rascals found the nest and stole the babies of one of their own kind! The jays hatched one this year, and their baby-care antics in our backyard is intensive. They have eaten all the snails!

The chase game belongs not only to birds and bears, but it seems the human sex chase goes on all the time! Take for instance, Sadie Hawkins' Day, where there is a role-reversal and females pursue males! That concept was created in Al Capp's "Li'l Abner" comic strip that ran from 1934 to 1978. On the annual November chase day, the boys were given a running start, followed by male-chasing girls. Daisy Mae after Li'l Abner was a regular feature in a story-cartoon with a glossary of appealing terms, like 'Dogpatch, Slobberia, Double-whammy, and Kickapoo Joy Juice!' A theme-park and a movie have been made from those lovable images, but Sadie Hawkins tops them all. Let's hear it for when there were real comics and real country music story-songs!

"Not knowing the thing that's chasing you is a lot scarier than seeing it right in front of you."
--Oren Peli

"Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence."
--Vince Lombardi

"If you chase two rabbits, you will not catch either one." --Proverb

"With the catching ends the pleasure of the chase." --Abraham Lincoln

"How lavish is Nature building up, pulling down, creating, destroying, chasing every particle from form to form, ever changing, ever beautiful."
--John Muir

YAH! Club Information

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Newsletter Information

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

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

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

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

The Last Word



Photo by Marie Scarrin

GOING, GOING... GONE?

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

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

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

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