



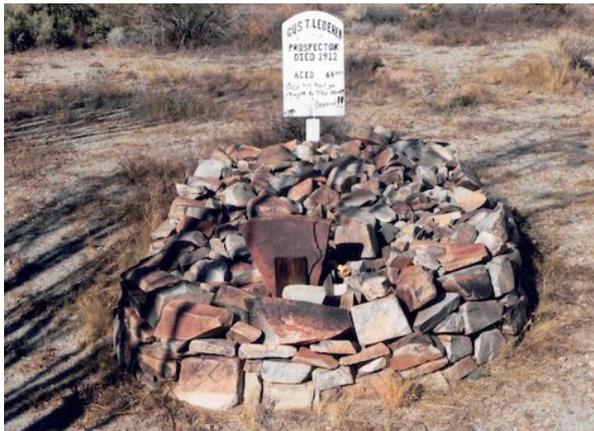
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WORDS OF *the* WILD

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Newsletter of the Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee

New Chuckwalla National Monument proposed for California Desert



An old pioneer grave in the Aztec Well area near Corn Springs is one of many historic sites in the proposed new national monument

An exciting new effort is afoot: the Protect California Deserts campaign. Sierra Club and a broad coalition of national and local conservation and community organizations are working to establish a new Chuckwalla National Monument that would border the southern edge of Joshua Tree National Park. This monument would permanently protect about 700,000 acres, providing recreation access, and preserving a critical link between the Sonoran and Mojave Desert ecosystems vital for native desert flora and fauna to move and adapt in the face of climate change.

The new Monument would safeguard this rich archaeological district that includes evidence of

trade, travel, and interaction among the several cultural groups associated with the area, the Cahuilla, Chemehuevi, Mojave and Serrano. Trade routes, habitation sites, trail spurs between the primary coastal-interior routes, multiple springs, and rock art sites in the bordering mountain ranges abound, as well as traditional cultural landscapes. Here also are found 19th century gold mining sites, World War II training areas, and the popular Bradshaw Trail, which follows the ancient indigenous route from spring to life-giving spring across the desert.

The campaign also seeks to expand Joshua Tree National Park to the southeast by about 20,000 acres of present Bureau of Land Management lands, which will link the Park with the proposed -- *continued page 2*

30 by 30 campaign gains in California

-- by Erin Woolley

California is ramping up efforts to deliver on its commitment to protect 30 percent of lands and coastal waters by 2030. Sierra Club California has been involved throughout this state process, providing feedback on the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) planning process and advocating for our strong 30x30 priorities. In April, the CNRA released the final "Pathways to 30x30" report, which will guide California's conservation efforts through 2030. The final Pathways document provides a solid framework and initial steps to advance 30x30 efforts, but



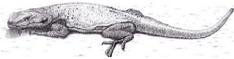
Rock art by Grace Fleming

there is still a lot of work to be done to develop the specifics of implementation. CNRA has since moved forward and announced the new 30x30 Coordinating Committee, which will help CNRA share information about 30x30, elevate local and regional opportunities, and foster coordination -- *continued page 2*

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New desert national monument



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Chuckwalla National Monument and other existing protected areas. The involved BLM lands were once the site of the largest iron ore mine in California. Adding these lands to the Park would enable the National Park Service to teach visitors about the history of mining in southern California.

The Monument includes some of the finest intact stands of microphyll woodlands, a scarce habitat in the desert, which hosts some 90 percent of song birds as well as supporting other wildlife such as chuckwalla lizards, desert bighorn sheep, and threatened desert tortoise.

Because of its rich habitat and wide-open spaces, the Chuckwalla Bench has been chosen by US Fish and Wildlife Service as the re-introduction site for endangered Sonoran pronghorn sheep, in an exciting effort to re-establish this iconic species, extirpated from the Sonoran desert in the 1940s.

The new Monument would be partly in eastern Riverside County and partly in Imperial County, and would enhance access to nature and Joshua Tree National Park for nearby underserved communities. In addition, the campaign proposes a study to determine recreational needs in the Mecca Hills and Orocopia Mountains.

Clearly, the rich cultural resources in this proposal call for collaboration and consultation with Native American interests. Outreach has begun to Tribes in the region, and early in 2023 we hope to secure a legislative champion to permanently protect this unique gem in the California desert. ♪

(Joan Taylor helped in preparation of this article.)

Sierra Club California fights to strengthen 30 by 30

-- from page 1

of ongoing efforts. In September, the CNRA hosted a 30x30 kickoff event to launch the 30x30 Partnership as a space for environmental groups and leaders to communicate and share knowledge, best practices, and opportunities for progress towards 30x30. Throughout the fall, CNRA has been hosting a Virtual "Expo" Series for the public to learn more about 30x30 programs, funding, and available resources. We are watching to ensure that CNRA's implementation builds upon the ideas in the Pathways report, and delivers on its commitments to biodiversity, conservation, and equity.

Achieving 30x30 will require significant and consistent investments over the next seven years. In August, the Legislature and the Governor finalized this year's budget, which includes funding for 30x30-related programs, including land acquisition and community capacity-building. Among other investments, the state appropriated \$245 million for the Wildlife Conservation Board to support planning, acquisition, and restoration projects, \$120 million for various state conservancies, and \$100 million for a Tribal Nature-based Solutions Program.

AB 2278 was signed into law in September. The bill, by San Jose area Assembly member Ash Kalra AD27, creates an accountability mechanism requiring CNRA to re-

port on the progress made toward achieving 30x30, including the number of acres conserved, the funds spent on 30x30 projects and programs, and the progress made to advance equity as part of 30x30 in the prior year. Sierra Club activists participated in in-district meetings over the summer to advocate in support of AB

Join us to help California meet its 30x30 conservation goals!

2278 and other legislative priorities.

This year's budget is just the first step for 30x30. For California to achieve this ambitious goal, a consistent source of funding will be required in the coming years to support additional science and research, acquisition, restoration, and ongoing stewardship and monitoring of conserved lands. We will continue to track the budget and legislative processes to ensure that the state elevates 30x30 and provides the resources required for its success--to truly conserve at least 30 percent of California's lands and waters.

The Sierra Club 30x30 Task Force volunteers** and local Chapters have been busy working to identify and support conservation projects that contribute to 30x30 goals, advocate for Sierra Club's 30x30 priorities at the local, regional, and state governments, and educate members of the public and officials about 30x30. The 30x30 initiative is a major opportunity to uplift local and regional conservation priorities, improve access to nature, and stop ongoing harms to California's ecosystems.

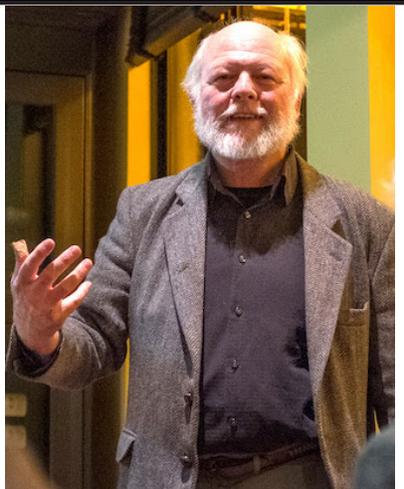
You can get involved with local 30x30 efforts by connecting with your Chapter, or with the statewide campaign by signing up on our 30x30 webpage! (<https://www.sierraclub.org/california/sierra-clubs-california-30x30-campaign>). ♪

(Erin Woolley is Policy Advocate with Sierra Club California in Sacramento. Her article appeared first in "Capitol Voice": <https://www.sierraclub.org/california/capitol-voice-november-2022#30x30>)

** See WOW, April 2021 and Dec 2021, for more on Sierra Club's 30x30 task force and its activities.

Conservationists around the country mourn Dave Foreman, friend and inspirational guide

William David Foreman, age 75, died on September 19, 2022, at his home in Albuquerque, NM, from interstitial lung disease, surrounded by family and friends. Dave was a friend, an esteemed activist, thinker, writer, and inspiring speaker on conservation and environmental issues, an uncompromising advocate for sharing the Earth with other living beings.



Avi Kwa Ame Bureau of Land Management November Nevada Hearing

-- by Christian Gerlach

The Bureau of Land Management and the Department of the Interior hosted a public meeting about the proposed Avi Kwa Ame national monument on Nov. 17, at the Aquarius Hotel and Casino in Laughlin, Nevada--just over 100 miles away from Las Vegas. BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Laura Daniel-Davis participated and led the meeting, along with Nevada BLM State Director John Raby.

The meeting was part of the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to support locally led efforts across the country to conserve important places, and

it responded to the strong local effort calling for the protection of Avi Kwa Ame. The hearing also responded to the many county, state, and Tribal resolutions for monument protection,

as well as pending legislation in Congress, that would establish the Avi Kwa Ame national monument for Spirit Mountain and surrounding landscape.

The hearing room was overwhelmed by supporters -- with more than 200 attendees packing the meeting room reserved by the Bureau of Land Management for only 150 people. The Honor Avi Kwa Ame Coalition had spent the weekend and week leading up to the hearing making a multitude of calls, sending thousands of text messages, and sending out volumes of emails to turn people out to the hearing. Our Wild America, Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter, and Southern Nevada Group Volunteers made several hundred phone calls to supporters on our lists to all surrounding communities including Needles, Lake Havasu City, and



Sierra Club volunteers showed up to support Avi Kwa Ame

Blythe, California; Bullhead City, Fort Mohave, Parker, and Quartzsite, Arizona; Las Vegas, Henderson, Boulder City, and Searchlight, Nevada.

And all of that hard work paid off to help our partners at the Nevada Conservation League fill a contracted bus to bring supporters and volunteers from Las Vegas. We also helped ensure that representatives from our longtime partners with the Las Vegas and Moapa Band of Paiutes were at the hearing. Representatives from nine Federally Recognized Native American Governments spoke. Working with the Federally Recognized Native American Governments and coalition of organizations, we filled the public testimony time of the hearing with speakers for protecting the proposed Avi Kwa Ame National Monument.

Linda Stout, Toiyabe Chapter volunteer and attendee at the BLM hearing, said: "Avi Kwa Ame, Spirit Mountain, is among the most beautiful, biologically diverse, and culturally significant places in the Mojave Desert. Thursday's public meeting highlighted an inspiring collaboration between tribes, conservationists and legislators who've worked tirelessly in designating Avi Kwa Ame as a National Monument."

The area is a magnificent extension of the Joshua Tree forest and majestic landscapes already protected by the Mojave National Preserve and Castle Mountains National Monument immediately adjacent across the

California line. These protections would safeguard a complex, connected natural system that includes endangered species, would invite more people to enjoy public lands, act as defense against climate disruption, and help protect 30 percent of the nation's lands and waters by 2030.

The surrounding mountain ranges--the McCullough Range, Spirit Mountains, New York Mountains, and Castle Mountains, are home to a wide variety of raptor species, including a very high density of golden eagles. In addition, nearly two dozen other raptor species reside in the proposed monument including bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and western screech owls. The area is designated as important to birding for the diverse birds that inhabit these lands other than birds of prey, including gilded flickers and curved-billed thrashers. The extinction crisis goes on, with birds taking the hardest hit. 🦅

On Dec. 1, President Biden publicly committed to protecting Avi Kwa Ame lands. Please join supporters across the nation in applauding the President's historic commitment, while urging him to swiftly follow through on his promise-- by protecting the full proposed boundaries requested by Tribal Nations by signing this petition: <https://act.sierraclub.org/actions/National?actionId=AR0374369>

photo: Linda Stout



Southern Nevada Group attendees Misty Haji-Sheikh and James Katzen



Christian Gerlach with the map of proposed Avi Kwa Ame National Monument

photo: Misty Haji-Sheikh

Mono Basin sage grouse decline

-- by Kristine Green

The January 2022 US Geological Survey (USGS) Annual Data Summary draft report on the bi-state (aka Mono Basin) sage-grouse population from 2008 to 2021 indicates the population declined 40 percent since 2008—a drop of 1,539 sage-grouse. The median total number of birds is estimated at 2,282. The report provides substantial quantitative analysis of the population decline based on bird tracking, monitoring, and translocation.

Because there are natural variations in the population size—with more birds in good precipitation years and fewer in low precipitation years—a model was used to determine the overall trend. In the USGS's 2018 integrated population modeling update, the model showed that looking back 24 years, the population increased by 57.7 percent from 1995, but looking back 18 or 11 years, the total population has decreased by 15.7 and 9.6 percent respectively since then. The question is will the population increase again or will this downward trend continue?

The bi-state birds, inhabiting the greater Mono Basin, are a distinct population segment of the greater sage-grouse that includes nine subpopulations in California and Nevada. The authors conclude the primary cause of the decline is the drought starting in 2012. Other factors are range contraction and raven predation. Seven of the nine subpopulations declined:

- Pine Nuts
- Mount Grant
- Long Valley
- White Mountains
- Fales
- Sagehen
- Desert Creek

The Bodie Hills population was stable. The report postulated that the reason that the Bodie Hills subpopulation remained relatively stable compared with other subpopulations is the cooler, more drought resistant habitat, and a better environment for the grouse. The Parker Meadows subpopulation increased because hens from the Bodie Hills were translocated to it during a 4-year period. Prior to that the subpopulation was critically low due to a high

percentage of infertile eggs and the lack of genetic diversity.

Of particular interest is the translocation project from Bodie Hills to Parker Meadows. There were 47 sage-grouse translocated between 2017 and 2019; 27 females and 20 males. Of the 47, 34 were confirmed dead post-translocation. Seven mortalities were from predators and one from a vehicle.

Initially, pre-nesting females were moved, but of the 27 pre-nesting females, 3 died within 16 days. Five initiated a nest. The next year post-nesting females were moved with their chicks—which was more successful. Of the 28 females



Photo: Lynn Boulton

Sage-grouse in the road.

and 149 chicks, 26 and 147 survived the translocation process. This indicates substantially more success in translocating females post-nesting. A few grouse got home sick—12 percent returned to their capture site in Bodie Hills and 7 percent relocated to the Sagehen site.

The study also monitored the number of avian predators in 2019 and 2021, comparing the number of raptors and ravens when livestock was present versus when it was not present. Ravens eat the

eggs of the sage-grouse.

"As of spring 2021, the Long Valley subpopulation represents 31 percent of all sage-grouse within the Bi-State DPS." [1] Historically it was the largest subpopulation representing over 40 percent of the total population. Drought is one factor in the decline, but the proximity to the dump, which supports a raven population, and the influx of human activity are also factors, as Long Valley anthropogenic disturbances to sage-grouse are high compared to the other subpopulations.

Although the effect of outdoor recreation pressure on sage-grouse has not been quantified, field crews have documented several nests less than 10 meters from well-traveled roads and have documented domestic dogs and camp sites near active nests. This type of disturbing encroachment would be greatly amplified by the proposed exploratory drilling in and around lekking areas. Drilling may take place after the mating and early nesting period; even though, there has been substantial organizational and public opposition to the project.

In 2013, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed the bi-state sage-grouse as a candidate species as threatened under the Environmental Species Act. In 2015, the USFWS decided to not list the bi-state sage-grouse. However, the U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, reinstated the species as a candidate species in May 2022. ∞

[1] Greater Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) Monitoring in the Bi-state Distinct Population Segment, California-Nevada, 2008-21.

Kristine Green is a volunteer with the Toiyabe Chapter's Range Of Light Group, Eastern Sierra.

January 18, 2023 Next Wilderness meeting

Program: "Bodie Hills Conservation" presented by Wendy Schneider, Executive Director of Friends of the Inyo. Join by Zoom from 5:30 pm to 7, as the California/Nevada Wilderness Committee starts the new year with this special program! After regular committee business—laying out plans for 2023, including outings, promoting 30 by 30, and getting ready for 2024's 60th anniversary of the Wilderness Act—our program will feature a major conservation issue in the eastern Sierra: **Protection needed for the wonderful Bodie Hills!** Email Committee chair JoAnne Clarke to get a zoom link. jo_clarke@att.net

Removal of Four Klamath River Dams to Begin in 2023 Largest River Restoration Project In U.S. History

On November 17, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) unanimously approved issuing a License Surrender Order for the Lower Klamath River Hydroelectric Project, as recommended by staff. The FERC vote follows the August 27th release of the staff's final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) recommending the removal of the lower four Klamath River dams and clears the last major hurdle necessary to implement the world's largest river restoration project – removal of the lower four Klamath River dams. With this order in place, the Klamath River Renewal Corporation, the non-profit entity created to oversee Klamath River dam removal and related restoration activities, and the States of Oregon and California can accept transfer of the Lower Klamath Project License from energy company PacifiCorp and start actual removal work early next year.

“The Klamath salmon are coming home,” proclaimed Yurok Chairman Joseph James. “The people have earned this victory and with it, we carry on our sacred duty to the fish that have sustained our people since the beginning of time.”

The FERC vote follows 20 years of environmental impact statements, scientific studies, negotiations with stakeholders and advocacy from the tribes and their conservationist allies and was made possible through a negotiated agreement between Karuk Tribe, Yurok Tribe, California, Oregon, conservation organizations, commercial fishing organizations, and dam owner PacifiCorp, a subsidiary of Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway Energy.

“Today's victory was well earned by thousands of people who fought for clean water, healthy fisheries, and environmental justice for Klamath River communities,” said Karuk Chairman Russell Attebery.

“Congratulations to all those who poured their blood, sweat and tears into making this happen. Water

and fish health are at the heart of our identity as Native People and we are looking forward to seeing a healthier watershed and fishery which will result in healthier communities for all Klamath Basin tribes,” said Hoopa Valley Tribe Chairman Joe Davis.

Commercial salmon fishing families along the West Coast are also celebrating. “Restoring the Klamath gives our struggling salmon fishing industry a chance to survive,” said Vivian Hilliwell, a former commercial fisher and now Watershed Conservation Director for the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA). “The possibility of revitalized Klamath fish runs gives us hope that we can continue our tradition of bringing wild salmon to dinner tables across America.”

Dam removal will first require a lot of heavy machinery and road and bridge improvement infrastructure, so the first year will be dedicated to getting the dam sites ready for demolition and hauling in necessary equipment.

In early 2024, the reservoirs are scheduled to be drawn down between salmon runs, when the sudden release of toxic algal reservoir water will have the least possible impact on river life. In mid-2024, demolition will begin with COPCO 2, the smallest dam, slated as the first to come down. Deconstruction of the remaining three dams will follow quickly, and by October 2024, the way should be open for salmon to return. ♻️

Taken, in part, from <https://www.dailykos.com/story/2022/11/17/2136822/-Federal-Energy-Regulatory-Commission-votes-to-approve-dam-removal-on-Klamath-River>.



photo: KQED/Molly Peterson

Klamath River dams: big changes coming

BLM to focus on habitat connectivity

On November 15, the Bureau of Land Management announced a new move to assess habitat connectivity on its vast western U.S. lands. Viewing this as a promising step toward implementing President Biden's “America the Beautiful” Strategy to conserve 30 percent of our nation's lands and coastal waters by 2030, the Sierra Club issued this statement:

“Sierra Club Welcomes BLM Memo on Habitat Connectivity

– On Nov. 15, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released an Instruction Memorandum (IM) to all field staff, effective immediately, which will inventory and assess habitat connectivity to identify how to manage public lands and best support priority species. This assessment would then ...inform land use plans and revisions on public lands the BLM manages.

To execute this policy, BLM will work with states, Tribes, and other partners to develop and implement proactive, collaborative ecosystem-based conservation strategies to promote habitat connectivity, such as removing physical barriers to fish and wildlife movements, installing wildlife crossings, promoting native plant communities, and installing signage to mitigate vehicle-wildlife collisions. This policy recognizes the importance of connections between and within priority habitats in planning processes. As habitat fragmentation and degradation escalate alarmingly, maintaining habitat integrity and connectivity has become a significant need.”

Bradley Williams, Sierra Club's Associate Director of Legislative and Administrative Advocacy in DC, remarked: “With animals, plants, and insects becoming extinct at unprecedented rates, largely due to human-driven habitat loss, much of what happens in the future relies on policies we put in place today – this action marks an urgent step to ensure the next generation has a chance to inherit a species-rich, biologically diverse world.”

While this is a good start, much more vigorous actions—a paradigm shift to bring land stewardship to act on aggressive biodiversity goals—is needed. ♻️

Sierra and Sequoia Forest Planning

Conservationists push in Objection Meeting for more Wilderness and Wild Rivers

-- by Steve Evans

The Sierra Club and its conservation allies participated in three days of meetings with the Forest Service in mid-November in Visalia to discuss resolution of multiple objections filed in response to the final Sequoia and Sierra National Forest Revised Plans. The objections included extensive arguments as to why the Forest Service should identify additional eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers, recommend more wilderness on the two southernmost national forests in the Sierra Nevada, protect old growth forests, and provide additional habitat protection for at-risk fish, wildlife, and rare plants.

The final Sierra and Sequoia forest plans identified 841,700 acres of wilderness quality lands on the two national forests that encompass the southern Sierra, but ultimately recommended only a paltry 4,906-acre addition to the Monarch Wilderness on the Sequoia Forest. No wilderness was recommended on the Sierra Forest.

The final Sequoia Plan identified 86 river and stream segments totaling 351.9 miles as eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers. The final Sierra Plan identified 33 eligible river and stream segments totaling 146.3 miles. Approximately 38 miles of the San Joaquin River upstream of Mammoth Pool and a short one-mile segment of the South Fork Kern determined eligible and recommended by the Forest Service in the 1990s were also included in the final plans.

High priority areas proposed in the two forests by the Sierra Club and

its conservation allies as recommended wilderness include the Devil Gulch-Ferguson Ridge area encompassing the South Fork Merced Wild River—adjacent to Yosemite National Park, the Bear Mountain and Sycamore Springs areas straddling eligible segments of Dinkey Creek, the Kings River Addition to the Monarch Wilderness, the Stormy Canyon and Cannell Peak areas bracketing the North Fork Kern Recreational River, and the proposed Domeland West addition to the Domeland Wilderness.

These areas include ecosystems under-represented in the Wilderness System, protect watersheds essential to maintain flows and water quality in existing and eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers, provide habitat for at-risk wildlife and plants and biological connectivity for their migration due to climate change, and offer outstanding primitive recreation and solitude opportunities.

The conservationist objections and subsequent negotiations with the Forest Service encouraged the agency to follow a “river systems” approach by including entire rivers and their crucial tributaries, and to identify additional protected outstanding values for the lower Kern River, Middle Fork Tule River, Dinkey Creek, and the San Joaquin River downstream of Mammoth Pool. The objections also supported expanding protection for the existing North and South Forks Kern, Kings, and South Fork Merced Wild and Scenic Rivers, by including eligible tributaries.

Conservationists were not the only interests pitching their views in the objection meetings. Representatives from the California Four Wheel Drive Association and the California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA) let it be known that they opposed any new wilderness recommendations and pitched the idea that areas should be taken out of wilderness



Photo: Steve Evans/CalWild

The Hites Cove trail along South Fork of the Merced River is popular for its spring wildflower displays

protection (something only Congress can do.) They also publicly accused conservationists of being rich urbanites who do not represent the public.

In addition to the Sierra Club, other conservation groups participating in the objection process include CalWild, Sierra Forest Legacy, California Native Plant Society, Pacific Crest Trail Association, Outdoor Alliance, and several other local groups and chapters. Other issues raised in the objections and discussed at the meeting included:

- ** the need to revise existing management plans for the North Fork Kern and Merced Wild and Scenic Rivers to address significantly increased recreational use;
- **providing administrative protection for roadless areas not recommended as wilderness;
- **establishing a protected corridor for the Pacific Crest Trail;
- **adding some declining wildlife species to the list of Species of Special Conservation Concern;
- ** creating a watch list of rare plants requiring monitoring, and protecting old growth forest ecosystems.

Now that the objection meetings are completed, the Forest Service will complete a transcript, review the arguments, and ultimately decide if their final plans require any changes. The agency indicated that this process will occur in early 2023. *Stay tuned!* ~



Recreating on Middle Fork Tule River, Sequoia National Forest

Anne Henny gets Sierra Club national award

In September, 2022, the Sierra Club held its annual award ceremony for a number of national awards--most go to prominent volunteers, but some --such as the Edgar Wayburn award for a elected official helping the environment, or the Ansel Adams award for environmental photography, or the William O Douglas award for legal advocacy, may go to non-Sierra Club members. There are also International and outings awards. The 2022 Zoom event was attended by members across the nation.

The Wilderness Committee's own Anne Henny was the recipient of a Volunteer Service award. This national award "Honors Sierra Club volunteers for strong and consistent commitment to the environment or the Club over an extended time."

Without doubt Anne Henny was a deserving awardee! In addition to chairing the CA/NV wilderness committee for six



Anne gets national award from Sandra

years, she also cochairs the newer California 30 by 30 task force, helped start the national Native Lands Rights team, and actively leads or takes a strong role in several other key conservation committees. Anne's newest role is to lead Wilderness Committee outings.

Thanks to the persistent effort of Committee member Sandra Cattell, Anne actually received her award before the September virtual ceremony. Sandra, knowing the national Wildlands and Wilderness Team, of which both she and Anne are members, planned an in-person meeting in Seattle in August, undertook some behind the scenes lobbying to get that award to Anne at the in-person event.

Congratulations, Anne, and thanks, again, Sandra. vnh 🌿



Outings

Support wilderness the Sierra Club way!



--May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds. -- Edward Abbey

Halloween Mojave Desert Exploration trip

Halloween is a great time to be in the desert. Summer heat is gone, and winter chill has not yet quite descended-- the weather tends to be just right.

photo: Bryan Baker



Mopah Spring

miles south of our own camp road, we drove to fairly near the wilderness boundary, and then --because hiking was a goal too, not just driving--we parked

Members of our wilderness committee, along with a couple of representatives from the Sierra Club's San Gorgonio Chapter, took part in the outing. It was the San Gorgonio Chapter which included in its 30x30 local conservation priorities a goal to expand the Mojave Trails National Monument to fulfil the original vision pursued by Elden Hughes and the Wildlands Conservancy to encompass all of the Chemehuevi Valley--south of Needles, CA.. That visionary process is ongoing, and our trip explored a few areas that would be included in an expanded monument.

We camped on the Mopah Springs side road about 1 1/2 miles from the highway where we found a flat area with a large fire ring that had obviously been used before. It was a pleasant campsite.

On Sunday, piling all of us into the two 4wd vehicles we had with us, we explored some of the area. Following a small dirt road westward to the wilderness edge some



photo: Vicky Hoover

The wilderness boundary

and walked. At the wilderness boundary sign, the road just kept going. Too bad! Some of our group walked farther to check it out: the road keeps on.

We all said this would make a great BLM service project for us -- helping design a turn-around and parking area before the wilderness boundary-- and then eradicate the visible wilderness road. Our Monday hike went from camp toward Mopah Spring; two vigorous trip members made it all the way there--9 miles! Then it was time to head home: but the desert calls and we'll be back. vnh 🌿



photo: Anne Henny

Our camp

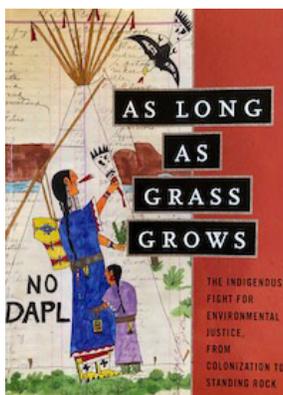
Two books help us understand the historic outlook of Indigenous people

--by Jane Uptegrove

As a Sierra Club Outings volunteer and environmental activist, I posit that learning Native American history is key for us as Sierra Club volunteers. It is about the civil rights of Indigenous Peoples throughout the US. And it is directly relevant to the history of the places we visit and take others to visit. I offer this brief review of two books that provide a national context for understanding specific histories of Indigenous Peoples who live on or were forced off the lands we visit. The books are: *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz; and *As Long as Grass Grows*, by Dina Gilio-Whitaker.

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz notes in the Introduction to her book, "Writing US history from an Indigenous peoples' perspective requires rethinking the consensual national narrative". She states that "Inherent in the myth we've been taught is an embrace of settler colonialism and genocide", and that "the myth persists, not for a lack of

free speech or poverty of information but rather for an absence of motivation to ask questions that challenge the core of the scripted narrative of the origin story," and "How might acknowledging the reality of US history work to transform society?"



Her book gave me a view of the arc of this history and framed the events and tragic losses in an historical context such that I can understand some of the "Why" and think more clearly about "What" to do about it.

With the same rigorous scholarship as Dunbar-Ortiz, Dina Gilio-Whitaker asks, "What does environmental justice look like when Indigenous peoples are at the center?" Her investigation of this history up to the Standing Rock protest

negates the Doctrine of Discovery, the Marshall Trilogy and Federal Indian law, and illuminates the legal and political basis of the "settler colonial structure, in a relationship of domination." She also discusses "The Myth of Wilderness and the Reality of Indian Land Management."

Given our direct involvement in government-protected land areas in the U.S. and the central role of Native Americans on the land for centuries, Gilio-Whitaker's book may lead us to develop better practices to protect and steward the land in truly equitable ways. I welcome your comments on these books at janeuptegrove@icloud.com.

An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States (REVISIONING HISTORY) by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014, Beacon Press, 296 p.

As Long as Grass Grows: The indigenous fight for environmental justice, from colonization to Standing Rock, by Dina Gilio-Whitaker, 2019, Beacon Press, 162 p. with Notes, selected bibliography and Index.

P.S. To follow up with further reading on Native American Peoples' history, consider picking up *Poet Warrior: a Memoir*, by Joy Harjo, or *Life Among the Piutes*, by Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins. ☞

(Jane Uptegrove is a Sierra Club national outings leader with the Knapsack Outings Subcommittee.)

Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee, an issue committee of the California Conservation Committee, advocates for preservation of unroaded, undeveloped public lands in a wild state through legislation and appropriate management, and sponsors stewardship and wilderness study outings.

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FIRST CLASS

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Senator Clinton Anderson of New Mexico wrote: "Wilderness is an anchor to windward. Knowing it is there, we can also know that we are still a rich nation, tending our resources as we should, not a people in despair searching every last nook and cranny of our land for a board of lumber, a barrel of oil, a blade of grass, or a tank of water."