Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area:

A Great Idea Whose Time has Come

By Victoria Brandon, Lake Group

Northern California’s Berryessa Snow Mountain region is one of the most biologically diverse yet least known parts of the state. Encompassing nearly 500,000 acres and stretching over 100 miles from the sub-alpine habitat of Snow Mountain Wilderness to the blue oak woodland surrounding Lake Berryessa, it is rich in significant natural features and exciting recreational opportunities. Visitors can view California’s second-largest population of wintering bald eagles, run the white water rapids of wild and scenic Cache Creek, observe herds of wild tule elk, and catch a glimpse of black bears. Opportunities for hiking, camping, botanizing, birding, hunting, and horseback riding are unsurpassed.

The sprawling region includes parts of seven counties, with by far the largest portion being herein Redwood Chapter, in Lake, Napa, Solano, and Mendocino Groups. Three different federal agencies have management responsibilities, as do several state and local agencies. Permanent preservation of this intact ecological treasure requires a collaborative management plan, rather than fragmented efforts from multiple jurisdictions. By designating the region as a National Conservation Area, Congress will enable the unified management needed for long-term protection, and also provide additional funding possibilities by including the region in the National Landscape Conservation System, with the mission of conserving and restoring nationally significant landscapes recognized for their cultural, ecological and scientific values.

Action is needed now even though most of this region remains unscheduled, because it faces a number of threats, such as industrial-scale criminal marijuana production, unmanaged recreation, invasive species, water pollution, and wildfire. In the future, when climate change is expected to shrink the available habitat for plants and animals, maintenance of intact north-south corridors will be vital for maintaining the connectivity needed to protect biodiversity and reduce extinctions.

Goals for the NCA include:

- long term protection of biological diversity
- better management of recreational assets, including trails, campsites, and signage
- improvement of sustainable economic opportunities for neighboring farmers and gateway communities

The BSMNCA campaign has been gaining momentum over the past several years, and local support has now built to critical mass, with endorsements that include several governmental entities, dozens of elected officials, and thousands of individuals. On January 24 Lake Group hosted a general membership meeting in the city of Clearlake, featuring a presentation on this exciting area, the benefits that designation will provide both ecologically and economically, and the next steps towards making it a reality.

This is somewhat to look towards the future, with the introduction of enabling legislation that translates to jobs and a generally stronger economy,” according to Geof Syphers, the Chief Sustainability Officer at Coddington Enterprises.

The study performed by Daleski Management Consulting, concludes that implementation of a CCA program in Sonoma County is feasible, and that CCA implementation would “significantly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, create local jobs, and have a substantial positive effect on the local economy.” The study can be found at: http://climatedevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Final-CCA-Feasibility-Report-101211.pdf

The only similar program of this kind is next door in Marin County. Known as Marin Clean Energy, that program launched in May 2010 and offers 27% renewable power in its mix as a basic service at rates competitive with PG&E, and an option for 100% clean power at a small premium. Over 80% of the ratepayers in Marin have stayed with the program.

In its vote, the Water Agency Board took action to further investigate various power mixes to find ways to reduce cost, look at including expanded energy efficiency programs to reduce rates; evaluate governance structures for the program; and study the option of joining, at least temporarily, with the Marin Energy Authority.

For more info about the program and how to get involved, visit www.sonomacleanpower.org or call Woody Hastings, Renewable Energy Implementation Manager at the Climate Protection Campaign and Sonoma Group Climate Energy Committee Member at 707-525-1665 x117.

The Climate & Energy Committee of the Sonoma Group worked to oppose Prop 16 in 2010, which was ultimately defeated, paving the way for CCA throughout California. The Climate & Energy Committee brought this promising clean energy policy to the Sonoma Group ExCom last summer, which resulted in unanimous support to become a “Friend” of Sonoma Clean Power, this is a growing list of Sonoma County leaders in support of the program.

Community Choice Aggregation is a program, enabled by state law, that allows communities to pool the electric load of their residents, businesses and other institutions in order to purchase and generate electricity on their behalf. The primary driver is the desire to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity sector in Sonoma County. PG&E has not met its 2010 state mandate of 20% renewable energy and a CCA has the potential to offer more than 50% renewable power upon launch.

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The program’s potential for 100% clean energy is amazing. It is technically and financially feasible. The way we get there is where the work lies.

The program has officially been dubbed Sonoma Clean Power and its next decision point will come in May when the Board meets to take five votes: first, on whether to take the option of joining, at least temporarily, with the Marin Energy Authority. Second, the Water Agency Board took action to further investigate various power mixes to find ways to reduce cost, look at including expanded energy efficiency programs to reduce rates; evaluate governance structures for the program; and study the option of joining, at least temporarily, with the Marin Energy Authority.
Klamath dam removal

The draft EIR/EIS on the Klamath dam removal has been released and comments were made by the Sierra Club to the Bureau of Reclamation on the draft. The Sierra Club maintains a clear position in support of dam removal, and has consistently held the position that the main-stem dams of the Klamath River must be removed in order to reopen historic salmon spawning grounds and, subsequently, to restore native Chinook salmon, Coho salmon, and steelhead runs. The Sierra Club firmly supports full decommissioning of the lower four dams of the Klamath Hydroelectric Project (KHP). In addition, the Sierra Club does not believe that dam removal should necessarily be tied too closely to the implementation of the Klamath River Basin Restoration Agreement (KRBA) and the current Klamath Basin Economic Restoration Act of 2011 (HR 3398, S 1851). The S.C summary of the DEIS/DEIR is that, overall, the alternatives offered by the DEIS/DEIR are insufficient. Those provided do not offer alternatives that significantly address water quality improvements, nor is there an alternative to fully consider dam removal on the Klamath River without implementation of the KRBA.

Chapter Chair Report

In 2007, the Sierra Club helped fund scientific review of the effects of potentially unnatural low Klamath River flows associated with the KRBA (Trueh 2007, Kamman 2007). This review concluded that flows during particular times of year and for particular water quality levels (e.g. nontidal v. tidal) would be insufficient to protect and restore salmon populations. Furthermore, the National Research Council (NRC 2004) report on recovering coho salmon and steelhead highlighted the Klamath River recommended expanding management in Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and re-establishing natural flow regimes in the Klamath’s upper tributaries.

Much on this contentious issue, which involves three Sierra Club Chapters, was expended by Diane Beck, our Conservation Chair - thank you, Diane! A story about Redwood Chapter continues to promote a Berryessa/Snow Mountain National Conservation Area. Funding has been established to support the campaign, in part because there has been a lot of outreach done in Lake and Napa counties. It seems that there is a lot of political support for doing this. Please read the article on page one about the project by our Vice-Chair, Victoria Brandson.

State of the Chapters assessment

In the last issue I mentioned that National Sierra Club conducted an assessment of the newly 70 Sierra Club chapters; this meant collecting data from each chapter. As a result of our assessment the Redwood Chapter has decided to put renewed focus on outreach and fund-raising this year. These are lean times but we don’t want that to lessen our important work. Chapter and Group Elections

Please see the results of the Chapter and Group Elections elsewhere in this issue. The Chapter Nominations Chair was Diana Nasser. Thanks, Diana, for seeing that the voting went smoothly.

JAY HALEMON, REDWOOD CHAPTER CHAIR

Save the Date!

Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference

On March 15 and 16, the western edition of the 2012 Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference will be held at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles. For the past two years, the Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conferences have brought together a diverse group of attendees from labor, environmental, and industry to discuss solutions for a green economy that will create good green jobs. It’s important that we, the environmental community, be well-represented to give environmental perspectives on global problems.

The Good Jobs, Green Jobs conferences, usually held in Washington, D.C., are sponsored by the BlueGreen Alliance Foundation. This year, to attract wider audiences, the conferences will be offered in four separate locations: Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Denver.

The BlueGreen Alliance was launched in 2006 by the United Steelworkers and the Sierra Club. Today, the BlueGreen Alliance has increased its membership uniting nearly 15 million people from organized labor, environmental, faith and human rights groups – all who understand the necessity for good jobs, a clean environment and a green economy. The BlueGreen Alliance is focusing on the passage of comprehensive clean energy and climate change legislation, restoring the rights of workers in the United States to organize and bargain collectively, and toward establishing new trade policies that promote growth and change in the environment.

Non-Sierra Club Outings

The following activities and events are not sponsored nor administered by the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has no information about the planning of these activities and makes no representations or warranties about the quality, safety, supervision or management of such activities. They are published because they are of interest to the readers of this publication.

Save on Electricity While You save the Earth!

Solar electricity is truly one of the best ways to combat rising costs of energy. And when you go solar with Real Goods, we’ll make a $250 donation to the Sierra Club. Good for you, good for the earth.

Buy a Green Convertible and Help the Environment

1995 Chrysler Lebaron Spruce Green Convertible - 14k original miles, one owner, Sierra Club member. $20k dealer price when new, Buy today $8500 and all proceeds go to the Sonoma Group Sierra Club.

3.0L V6 Engine; 4 speed Automatic Transmission
Front Wheel Drive; disc brakes, airbags Electric Power convertible top with glass rear window with defroger Power Windows and Locks Stainless steel exhaust system (will never rust)
14 gallon fuel tank / 20-29mpg
Spruce Green metallic paint color with tan convertible top and matching tan/champagne color cloth interior with bucket seats.

This Lebaron really does have only 14k original miles and it is basically New like the day it was purchased by the one and only owner! The tan interior is in excellent condition with no rips, tears, stains or odor as you would expect with only one non-smoking owner. The exterior is just as nice, showing no dents, dings or scratches. The paint is in excellent condition and shiny all around.

Naturally it runs and drives as good as it looks and everything works as it should. You won't be disappointed!

Buy this convertible and Explore, Enjoy and Protect the environment at the same time. Contact Tom at tdevlin@sonic.net for more details and a test drive. Again, all proceeds from the sale of this car go to the Sierra Club Sonoma Group for its work to protect the environment.

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Solar electricity is truly one of the best ways to combat rising costs of energy. And when you go solar with Real Goods, we’ll make a $250 donation to the Sierra Club. Good for you, good for the earth.
Instructs to hikers

Get out early: We often need at least 15 minutes after scheduled meeting time. The leader is in charge of the trip and is responsible for your welfare and the good name of the Club. If you have to cancel your hike, please let the leader know. The leader is in charge of the trip and is responsible for your welfare and the good name of the Club. All leaders must coordinate their outings with the Sierra Club Outings Department.

Discomfort early. Lodge reservations are not refundable. Check with the leader.

Peter Grubbi Winter Hut Backpack Trip. Leaders: Jim Gannon/Dan Anderson

O  u  t  i  n  g  s

Tales from the Low End: Botany, a Fungus and a Field Guide to the Disadvantaged.

Heavenly Sights: Heavenly Sights is a low key outing for those wanting to enjoy the beauty of the Sierra Nevada. The trip is a great way to get away from the city and enjoy the outdoors. The trip is led by an experienced guide and includes a walk through the Sierra Nevada. The trip is a great way to get away from the city and enjoy the outdoors. The trip is led by an experienced guide and includes a walk through the Sierra Nevada.

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**Outings**

530-426-3632 indicate you are with that rating.

How fast or slow do you go? You're probably asking yourself if an outing leader walks fast or slow? Keep in mind that the leader's speed is but one part of hiking. How high up a mountain the hike starts, the total mileage and elevation gain (up hill) and loss (down hill) greatly affect the difficulty of a hike, regardless of how fast or how slow you walk. In addition, different factors influence your hiking ability. Each person is unique and has his or her own limitations. Some hikers are naturally more athletic, while others may have health problems or physical limitations. Some hikers enjoy hiking at a steady pace, while others prefer to walk at a faster or slower pace. It's important to be aware of these factors and adjust your pace accordingly.


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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Shaggy Dog Club</strong></th>
<th><strong>Wednesday Activities &amp; Opportunities</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sonoma Group Hike Leaders:</td>
<td>Sonoma Group-outings leaders training. Always a need for more leaders for outings. If you would like to be trained email Cardi <a href="mailto:cardow@sonic.net">cardow@sonic.net</a> or call 546-6300.</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Group Hike Leaders:</td>
<td>Bring your children, camping and easy hikes.</td>
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<td>North Group Hike Leaders:</td>
<td>North Group is desperately seeking hike leaders. Please contact Bill Night, the Outings Chair, for more information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help the Sonoma Group Water Committee!:</td>
<td>Come to our meetings at 7:00 PM at the Environmental Center on the third Wednesdays of most months. The Water Committee is working on issues related to measures to conserve, save, and reuse this valuable resource. Our goal is to preserve and improve the natural water environment, the responsible use of water by people, and the creation of sustainable water users. Water conservation effort will be focused on the Sonoma/San Francisco Bay Area.</td>
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North Group Report

Pizza Party Scheduled for March 13

Members and supporters are welcome to attend a pizza party starting at 6 p.m. at the Adorni Center on the Eureka waterfront. Speakers on climate change and a discussion of conservation issues will follow between 7 and 8:45 p.m. Info: Gregg, 707-826-3740.

Election Results

Members and supporters are welcome to attend a pizza party starting at 6 p.m. at the Adorni Center on the Eureka Waterfront. Speakers on climate change and a discussion of conservation issues will follow between 7 and 8:45 p.m. Info: Gregg, 707-826-3740.

Comments Submitted on Klamath

National Sierra Club (SC) submitted comments to the Bureau of Reclamation (BR) on the Klamath Basin Electric Project Facilities Removal DEIS/DEIR. The comments were the work of three Chapters—Redwood, Mother Lode, and Oregon—and National staff. Highlights of the comments: 1) SC supports dam removal and strongly favors full decommissioning of the lower four dams; 2) SC believes that dam removal should be tied to implementation of the Klamath Basin Operations Agreement (KBRA) and current legislation (HR3398, S1851) that has been introduced in Congress; 3) SC believes that the DEIS/DEIR offers insufficient alternatives (does not include dam removal without KBRA implementation). The letter can be found here: https://www.sierraclub.org/our-work/water-and-climate/klamath.

Great Clear for Klamath

Outings Chair Bill Knight reports that during 2011, 20 outings were completed, involving 150 participates. Four volunteers led hikes: Xandra Manns, Melissa Groom, Allison Bronkall, and Bill Knight. Special thanks to Xandra, who led 11 hikes, and Allison, who led the longest outing (14 participants on a parent/child visit to Trinity Falls in Redwood National Park). There is always need for more leaders, so if you would like to help people explore the beautiful North Coast, contact Bill at bill.knight.email@gmail.com.

Napa Group Report

Water and climate change issues are dominating our current conservation efforts. Groundwater, being virtually unregulated in California, is the "last frontier" for management of our state water resources. Napa County has at last launched a study group, the Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC), to plan for studying the status of our aquifers. Napa Sierra Club, represented by ExCom member Marilee Talley, has at seat at the table, and will be pushing for a comprehensive effort, which will eventually help us to understand how much agricultural and population growth our county water supplies can support.

Sonoma Group Report

Airport:
Sonoma Group drafted a position letter to the Sonoma County Supervisors. Leading concerns are about noise and large increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Our letter went with a detailed analysis of our issues.

Carneros Ranch/Port Sonoma Fill Project:
We appealed to the Board of Supervisors to overturn the zoning board's approval of the project, and require an EIR. Our Chair, Steve Birdlebough, and Water Committee Chair Len Holt have provided the Supervisors with a detailed list of concerns about the project.

Among the issues not addressed by the county include: water pollution; air quality; impacts of turning Port Sonoma into an industrial off-loading site for barges; effects of predicted sea level rise; leaching of contaminants.

The wording of the above document, plus the letter regarding airport expansion, can be found on the Sonoma Group's Facebook Page.

March Awards Dinner:
March 9 at 6:30 p.m. Info: Gregg, 707-826-3740.

Lake Group Report

Permanent protection for Berryessa Snow Mountain region

As this edition of the Needles was going to press, Lake Group was busy planning our first general membership meeting of 2012, to be held in the city of Clearlake on January 24 and featuring a campaign update on the proposed Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area. For more information on this exciting conservation initiative, see the article on page one of this issue.

Lakeport annexation update

As discussed a few months ago the city of Lakeport has been considering annexing a tract of land that includes both prime agricultural soils and sensitive wetlands close to Clear Lake. The Sierra Club predicts that inclusion of these areas in the city would lead to their development at typical urban densities, with inevitable negative environmental impacts. Nonetheless, the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve the environmental review of the project in its entirety—without an Environmental Impact Report. Lake Group believes that if these sensitive areas are not removed from the annexation proposal a full EIR must be prepared.

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Redwood Chapter Election Results

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<th>Napa Group</th>
<th>Sonoma Group</th>
<th>Lake Group</th>
<th>Mendocino Group</th>
<th>Mary Walsh</th>
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<td>Osloh Kennedy</td>
<td>Ned Forsyth</td>
<td>Roger Hartwell</td>
<td>Jim Kelkoe</td>
<td>Cheri Holden</td>
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<td>Connie Clement</td>
<td>Greg Gold</td>
<td>Marilee Talley</td>
<td>Duane Kromm</td>
<td>Tom Gilliam</td>
<td>Trinity County</td>
<td>Carrie Durkey</td>
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<td>Terry Scott</td>
<td>Felice Pace</td>
<td>Marc Pandone</td>
<td>Sonoma Group</td>
<td>Sarah Scott</td>
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<td>Carol Strong</td>
<td>Nick Vogel</td>
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<td>Lisa Hunter</td>
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<td>John Williams</td>
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<td>Jennifer Allen</td>
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Redwood Breeze Corner

Covering Benicia, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun, Vacaville and Vallejo

sierrclub.solanogroup@gmail.com 707-319-6398

Solano Group Volunteer Opportunities:

Membership Co-Chair: about 4 hours a month. It's mostly computer work.

Web Page Master: We need someone who knows front page to update the Solano Page (about 2 hours every other month).

VALCORE Recycling Board Alternate: May need to attend one meeting per year.

ExCom: Come join us for our monthly meetings which rotate between Vallejo, Fairfield and Vacaville. We are making a positive impact on our county and need a few more people to help carry the load. Call Jane for information. Jane 707-319-6398

HELP PAY FOR OUR LANDFILL LAWSUIT.

(Our attorney's fees are 30000 cams per hour)

Please bring your CRV – CA Cash Refund containers down to VALCORE: (38 Sheridan St. Vallejo, Mon - Sat, 10am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 4:30pm.

OR Cash them in at your local recycle center and send us a check for the refund amount.

2011 Sierra Club Scholarship Award:

Gregory Maring is the 2011 recipient of the Sierra Club scholarship at Solano College. This is his 17th annual scholarship for environmental students. He lives in Fairfield and is currently majoring in Biology. He is entering his final semester at Solano College, then transferring to UC Davis in the fall as a Microbiology major. His long term goal is as a pathologist, or to work for a biotech company such as Genentech. He was recently diagnosed with a chronic autoimmune disease that left him bedbound without a biologic drug, therefore he chose research to help those like him.

Greg is active in hiking, snowboarding, kayaking, and camping. Most of his hobbies are outdoors so protecting the environment is so important to him. He is also a great photographer and you can see some of his awesome pix on http://www.flickr.com/photos/7071911:

Congratulations Gregory:

-Rene Phiferon and Jane Boger, Solano Group

Mendocino Group Report

A new member of the Mendocino Group Executive Committee sends the following information.

Fellow concerned citizens:

I’m sure you are all aware of the existence of genetically modified food that is bought every day at the local grocery store in all our communities. It is time to exercise our right to know, to know what is in our food. There is currently NO required labeling of genetically engineered food. There will be a initiative on the November, 2012 ballot that will require the labeling of GMO foods in the retail market. The signature gathering for the initiative will begin mid-February. Contact Carrie Durkeur at cdurkeur@mcn.org if you would like to help with the signature collection.

For more on the campaign and genetically engineered food:

www.ResponsibleTechnology.org
www.labelgmos.org
www.organicconsumers.org

Hope to hear from you if you want to help.

The signature collection phase: mid-February to mid-April.

Rixanne Wehren reports that the Coastal Group joined with the California Native Plant Society to review a proposal to use part of the Regional Park land near Fort Bragg for Off-Highway Vehicle trails. The Mendocino Coast Recreation District was hopeful that an ORV facility would bring in much-needed funds for the Park. However, much of the land is covered with Pygmy Forest, a very rare and unique habitat type that appears along the Mendocino coast. The park land is already being abused daily by ORV riders, and the Recreation District has no staff to protect it. Sierra Club and CNPS wrote letters describing the rare habitat and opposing Off-Highway Vehicle use. While the park land is still not protected, the Board decided to table any discussion of ORV use at this time.

Mendocino Group has made a donation to Coast Action Group in support of the Storm Water suit. Tom Wodetzki has come aboard to be the Political Chair. Thanks to everyone who voted in the election.

-Marie Walsh, Mendocino Group Chair

Redwood Needles

February 1, 2012

Redwood

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-Marie Walsh, Mendocino Group Chair

Built by Sierra Club members in 1934, this rustic, hostel-style lodge stands atop historic Donner Pass, just an hour and a half from Sacramento.

The Lodge grooms its own cross country ski and snowshoe trails, rents equipment for these activities and offers cross country ski lessons. The unbeatable location of the Lodge provides quick and easy access to the legendary Donner Summit backcountry ski terrain or any of its downhill or cross country ski resorts.

Guests enjoy excellent family style meals, a friendly staff and a casual and communal atmosphere.

See you on Donner Summit...

For more information about our special programs or to receive a full schedule and description of Clair Tappaan programs please visit our website at www.ctt.sierraclub.org or call (800) 679-6775.
Send all Meeting events by the 8th of the month to Carl Inglinc: chinglin@sonic.net Sierra Club meetings are open to all members. You are welcome to participate or observe as often as you wish. Meetings are located in Sonoma County unless otherwise noted. Visitors should call the committee chair to verify time and place. The Sonoma County Environmental Center is located at SSa Ridgway Avenue in Santa Rosa (West of Hwy 101, two blocks North of College and 1 1/2 blocks West of Cleveland Ave, South of Coddington).