From the Chair

A busy six months!

BY ANNE MACQUARIE

WE’VE CONTINUED TO BE HARD AT WORK during the six months I’ve been Toiyabe Chapter Chair – here’s some of what we’ve been doing.

Membership. It’s been called the “Trump Bump” – the bump in members in environmental groups since the 2016 election. Is it over now that we’ve settled down with one of the most anti-environmental administrations we have ever seen?

We’re not getting as many new members as last year, but at 6432 members, our numbers are higher overall than before the election. The Trump bump also brought in new volunteer activists, both current members who were moved by the election to become more active and new members who joined to make a difference.

Cathy Schmidt, in her first term as a member of the Chapter Excom, is heading up membership engagement. Cathy and Charlotte Cox of the Great Basin Group are working on ways to match members with meaningful opportunities for engagement in issues that are important to them. If you have any good ideas of how to accomplish this, please contact Cathy.

2018 midterm elections critical to the environment. We can’t elect a better environmental president yet, but we can make sure we have a more balanced Congress, and we can support the champions who made the 2017 Nevada legislative sessions so good for the environment. The Chapter and the Southern Nevada Group are collaborating on a very active political program.

We are endorsing candidates at all legislative sessions so good for the environment. Please see CHOOSE HOPE, page 3.

Choosing Hope

BY BRIAN BEFFORT, TOIYABE CHAPTER DIRECTOR

I CAN’T WATCH OR LISTEN TO news for very long these days. It’s so easy to be dragged down by the toxic drama of national politics, and by the myriad assaults on our air, water, lands, and wildlife. It can all feel so overwhelming and defeating, like everything is falling apart.

It reminds me of my year living in South Africa in the late 1980s, a time between Mandela’s release from prison and his election as president and the official fall of Apartheid. Headlines wavered between announcing another move toward peace between Mandela and current-president F.W. deKlerk, and commuter-train massacres by pro-Apartheid thugs.

A close friend at the time told me, “It’s like riding on a see-saw between hope and despair.”

That sentence has stuck in my brain ever since, and I understand that it can feel as though we’re riding that same see-saw today.

Please see CHOOSE HOPE, page 3.

Bequests are a way to support Toiyabe Chapter’s mission

BY DAVID VONSEGGERN

INTERESTED IN FURTHERING THE GOALS of the Toiyabe Chapter after you are no longer walking those trails? Toiyabe Chapter members can arrange a bequest to the Chapter rather than to the national organization.

By doing this, you will be assured that your gift stays in the Chapter to continue supporting the protections you want for Nevada or eastern California.

Because the language must be stated exactly to avoid misinterpretation, please contact the Chapter Director, Brian Beffort (brian.beffort@sierraclub.org), or the Fundraising Committee Chair, Janet Carter (jkumar167@aol.com), to make sure the language is correct.

PROTECT our wildlands from open pit gold mining: Please comment!

BY FRAN HUNT, SIERRA CLUB EASTERN SIERRA ORGANIZER

Our state wildlands are facing a new threat and need your help. California’s State Mining & Geology Board (SMGB) is starting to consider regulatory changes that could pave the way to expanded open pit mining — including industrial-scale cyanide heap leach mining — in the state. The SMGB has held one public workshop already in Riverside, CA and another is scheduled for Sacramento, CA on July 13.

At present, California mining regs include stringent backfill requirements that actually deter the development of new, environmentally destructive, open pit mines in our state. However, the mining board (which has no environmental representative), has announced its review in response to mining industry pressure.

California’s mining regulations provide critical statewide safeguards — and weakening them would aid and abet the Interior Department’s and the Trump Administration’s pro-extraction agenda; taking California in the wrong direction and away from its role as environmental defender.

It would be hard to overstate how much of a threat this rule change poses to wildlands in the state — California’s backfill rules are arguably the best defense to mining we have here, as the federal Mining Law of 1872 prioritizes mining over all other public land uses. Stringent backfill requirements help make it uneconomical to mine low grade gold deposits. The fight to protect Conglomerate Mesa, a wild area managed by the BLM on Death Valley National Park’s doorstep in Inyo County, CA, may hinge on maintaining these state regulations. One needs only to visit our neighbor Nevada to see what happens in a more permissive state and what large open pits mines do to the land, water, air, recreational access and wildlife.

What you can do. Your comments can help defend our state from the damaging impacts of industrial scale open pit mining. Please comment before June 13 if you can so the SMGB will have your comments before the Sacramento public workshop.

Email Sierra Club organizer Fran Hunt at fran.hunt@sierraclub.org for a sample comment letter. Or write your own letter and tell the Board: (1) open pit mining pit mining permanently scars wild landscapes, pollutes our air and water, degrades wildlife habitats, and spoils outdoor recreation opportunities; (2) our state’s backfill rules do not need to be amended; don’t undertake changes at this time; (3) these important rules should not be reconsidered at a time when the Board has no environmental member and while the Trump Administration is aggressively pursuing its destructive agenda of environmental rollbacks; and (4) There are many more.

Please see CONGLOMERATE MESA, page 5.

PROTECT our wildlands from open pit gold mining: Please comment!
Great Basin Gatherings

Great Basin Group

BY KATY CHRISTENSON, GREAT BASIN GROUP CHAIR

Great Basin Group Monthly Programs. The GBG hosts 7 pm monthly programs at Bartley Ranch Western Heritage Center on the second Thursday of each month, except June, July, and August. A pre-program ACTIVISM session begins at 6:15pm. Please see outings websites for more details. The September program will feature a “Meet the Candidates” forum.

Great Basin Group Annual Members picnic. Scheduled for Sunday August 26, 2018, at the Bear Mat group camp site in Galena Creek Park. All Sierra Club members are welcome! Great Basin Group ExCom meetings. First Tuesdays at 5:30pm at Swill Wine & Coffee. All are welcome!

Outings. GBG’s motto is “We Get YOU Outdoors.” GBG adventures meet all abilities and interests. Join us by checking these websites: www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Hiking-Reno www.sierclub.org/toiyabe/great-basin Membership. It was reported that 80 new members have joined Sierra Club GBG recently. The Club now sends postcards to each new member with a welcome message.

Conservation. Great Basin Group now has a 24-page 4”x8” local plant guide, thanks to David von Seggern and recent ExCom member, Matthew Salazar. The pamphlet, “Know Your Flora: A Guide to the Most Widespread Trees, Shrubs, Flowers, & Grasses in the Truckee Meadows & Surrounding Hillsides” was off the press in early April. This pamphlet is being distributed to Great Basin Group outings participants and various organizations around the Truckee Meadows. This pamphlet especially helps newcomers to our area become acquainted with the most visible and common flora in our area.

Local Activism. Local GBG members, and others, are involved in activities related to the proposed Washoe County lands bill in Congress. The primary push is to encourage members and others to SPEAK UP and SPEAK OUT. It is NOT necessary to speak from the steps of City Hall. Simply sharing with friends and others the ways you have learned to save energy and/or information on local activism activities works to spread the message – one person at a time.

Local GBG members have mapped known trailheads used for day and evening hikes within about a half-hour of the cities of Reno and Sparks, and organized the information in a database. The list of trails is now over 130, but only about 30 have been incorporated into the inventory so far. Several Great Basin Group outings leaders are working on this project.

Get Kids Outdoors Programs. Students from Sutro Elementary School benefited from a GKO grant that supported a day snowshoe trip in January. Sue Jaccx reported a beautiful day of snowshoeing was enjoyed by Alice Maxwell Elementary School students in March (they also benefited from a GKO grant for the overnight trip).

In May, Libby Booth Elementary School students participated in a Great Basin Outdoor School program with the support of a GKO grant. All or most of the students in these schools qualify for the federal free and/or reduced lunch program. Teachers continue to rave about the experiences enjoyed by the children through the GKO grants.

Great Basin Group Outings News

By Daniel Ellsworth

LimeBike. This new service was launched in Reno in May with a network of 1000 fixed gear bikes. From the company: “LimeBike is revolutionizing mobility in cities...by empowering residents with a greener, more efficient, and affordable transportation option that also improves urban sustainability. By...deploying a fleet of smart-bikes...that are enabled with GPS, wireless technology, and self-activating locks, LimeBike is improving urban mobility by making the first and last mile faster, cheaper, and healthier for riders...Learn more at www.limebike.com.” LimeBikes cost $1 per 30 minutes of use. If you see a damaged LimeBike, you can use their app to easily report it and one of their employees will pick it up and repair it. Use the promo code LIMERENO to get $3 in ride credits.

Bike outings. The Great Basin Group has been posting bicycle outings over the past year. This is a great addition to the activities offered by our outings program and includes both road and mountain bike rides. Watch our meetup site for more rides to be posted in the future.


Outings leaders wanted. Are you an experienced hiker, trail runner, kayaker, bicyclist, rock climber, skier? Do you believe in the Sierra Club mission? Do you want to share your experience with others? If so, consider becoming an outings leader for the Great Basin Group of the Sierra Club. Contact Outings Chair Daniel Ellsworth for more details: danomike@yahoo.com

FROM THE CHAIR...continued from page 1

levels and we have restarted the Sierra Club Nevada PAC to gather funds to spread the environmental message and get our endorsed environmental champions elected. In June, national Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune came to Reno to headline a successful “Swing Nevada Green” event.

Tobi Tyler, Chapter Political Chair, says, “It’s been a whirlwind of activities since January, and though on a steep learning curve and often overwhelmed, I am enjoying everything about it -- from working with a fantastic team, to researching and interviewing candidates, to having fun planning and attending fundraisers. And we’re just getting started with GOTV, when the real fun begins.”

List of endorsed candidates. Check out the Toiyabe Chapter website at https://www.sierraclub.org/toiyabe/toiyabe-chapter-political-committee.

Other projects such as oppose a proposed Washoe County lands bill that would give away excessive amounts of public land to developers; collaborating with UNR and UNLV student groups to divert the University from fossil fuel investments; and getting Mammouth Lakes and Reno “Ready for 100” percent clean energy.

FOUR OCT - NOV - DEC ISSUE
In February, Friends of Nevada Wilderness sponsored a work party to establish a trailhead for Gass Peak in the Las Vegas Range. This range is located directly north of Las Vegas. Gass Peak (6943 ft) overlooks the city, but contrary to brochures listing it as the range high point, Quartzite Mountain (7133 ft) claims range high point. Gass is on the NV P2K list making it desirable for those hiking that list.

We planned to join this FNW volunteer trip, planning opportunities for a group of us would hike Gass Peak the following day. Our first meeting spot was Corn Creek Visitor Center in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. A great place to stretch the heavily on their nature trails and look at exhibits before tackling the rough roads.

At our camp near Gass Peak trailhead, we had the company of Joshua trees and a view of the snowy Spring Mountains.

In the morning, our group set out to work on the trailhead. First, a safety talk, then we spent the day establishing the trail. FNW is a great organization with many interesting volunteer opportunities. They have year-round projects on their website with new additions each month.

**Trek through the Pah Rah Range of Washoe County**

*By David Von Seggern (vonseggern@sbcglobal.net) & Dorothy Hudig (hudig@sbcglobal.net)*

The Pah Rah Range extends north-south from the southwestern shore of Pyramid Lake to the Truckee River between Reno and Wadsworth. This range contains a 50-50 mix of private and public (BLM) land, with the largest concentrations of private land in the central and western parts of the range. Compared to the Pinedale Range to the west of Reno, the public parts of the Pah Rah Range are largely natural, roadless, and without trails of any kind, although wildfires have taken a toll. While we favor wilderness designations in the northern part of Washoe County, it is important to pay attention to natural areas nearby.

Though the Pah Rah Range is hardly on any person’s candidate list for wilderness, its preservation as open space near a large population center is meaningful for recreational opportunities. It is also meaningful for wildlife inhabiting this range: big horn sheep, deer, and antelope. There are also Native American cultural sites and more historic sites. Because much of the range drains down to the Truckee River from the north side, it is crucial to keep it from development in order to avoid polluting runoff to the river.

To acquaint ourselves with this range, we did a two-day backpack over the southern part of the range on May 27-28, from Golden Eagle Regional Park in Sparks to the Wadsworth exit on I-80. The trip was over nine miles with the high point at about 7200 feet, 2600 feet above the starting point. Sub-optimut routing added another 600 feet due to dropping into a drainage and climbing back up. We had cached water at the half-way point and needed to find it at the end of the first day — which lasted 12 trail hours due to the ruggedness of the route and the weary condition of the backpackers. We arrived as the sun set over the peaks, with six antelope staring at us from about 100 yards off.

The Pah Rah Range is severely lacking in water, with a few intermittent streams becoming bone dry in summer. Springs are few, and the Nevada Division of Wildlife has three guzzlers along our route — all filled with water after some welcome rains in the days before. At our camping spot, one could still see back to downtown Reno in the distance, to Fernley the other way, and downtown Reno Industrial Center across the Truckee River to the south. The eerie glow of lights from TRIC is a reminder of the pace of development in the river corridor. Other lights shone from the two power plants and other structures along the river.

The second day was a sunny and uneventful downhill hike. We saw a few more antelope, an amazing variety of spring wildflowers, hundreds of sea gulls nesting near a verdant basin, several wild horses, old fence lines, mine tailings to the north and east of Olinghouse, four major power lines, and oceans of cheat grass colonizing burned ar eas. Meadowlark songs were our most frequent break in the silence, and hawks often soared effortlessly overhead against the blue sky.


**CHOOSE HOPE . . . continued from page 1**

People have accused me of being Pollyanna, but I see compelling reasons to think hope is winning. These reasons are the people around me; people just like you, who are working hard to change the trajectory of our politics and economy toward more benevolent outcomes for the environment and our communities.

For the last six months, more than a dozen volunteers on the Toiyabe Chapter’s Political Committee spent hundreds of hours researching, evaluating, and debating candidates at every level of office. I’m writing this before the June Primaries, so I don’t know the outcome at this point. But based on the excited responses we’re receiving, people across the political spectrum are ready for a change, and they’re ready to step up to do more than they have before to make that change happen.

Hundreds of volunteers across our region have joined together in planning meetings, before policy-making councils, and at rallies in the streets to speak out in favor of renewable energy, a wiser response to climate change, and our public lands and wildlife.

And coordination among conservation-oriented nonprofits has never been stronger in Nevada. We are working strategically together and putting aside our minor differences to focus on the most important results that matter most — our air, water, public lands, wildlife, protecting our foundational environmental laws, and creating a healthier future for our communities.

This increasing level of agreement, coordination, and action tells me many others across party lines agree with me and are working for the same. It tells me mainstream news media are missing the most important stories. It tells me hope has a chance.

And the one thing that makes us even more likely to win — you! Voices for the environment have become more powerful because more voices are joining the chorus. Your voice will make us stronger still.

I don’t know what level of public engagement will ensure the protections and forward-thinking policies we seek, and I’m sure there will be many defeats along the way. But I am convinced if each of us steps up contributes more than we have in the past, it will be enough to turn the tide.

At the end of the day, no matter how it works out, I want to tell my son, and myself, that I did everything I could to make a difference. Help us all by telling yourself, and the ones you love, the same thing.

**A gourmet hike up Deadman’s Creek Trail**

*By Sharon Marie Wilcox*

In May, Charlotte Cox and Sharon Marie Wilcox took a group of hungry hikers up Deadman’s Creek Trail to enjoy a shared dinner at the gazebo. Everyone brought delicious food and thirst-quenching beverages to enjoy as we shared fun conversation and soaked in the views of Washoe Lake and the Carson Range. A relaxing time was had by all. Stay tuned to join in the next one!
CONSERVATION ROUNDPUP

Walk Lake: Is it saved?

T oiyabe Chapter has worked closely with Walker Lake Working Group and many other conservation groups since the 1990s to save Walker Lake from diminishing fresh water in-floWS and increasing concentrations of dissolved solids antithetical to fish survival. Our activities included conducting tours of Walker River for government officials, media, and the public, as well as testifying at hearings held by Senator Harry Reid and Nevada State agencies, attending many Walker Lake Loon Day events (when the lake is home to fish and birds), organizing the Walker Lake Festival in 1999, and supporting litigation on behalf of the Lake.

The chances of recovery of Walker Lake’s damaged lacustrine ecosystem were greatly improved when the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals made three significant rulings on May 22, 2018, in litigation started by Mineral County and others in 1994. One ruling determined that Mineral County does have standing to pursue its public trust doctrine lawsuit. In another ruling the Appeals Court said that the Judge also erred in dismissing a case in which the Walker River Paiute Tribe asserted water rights. The Appeals Court made a rare decision to reassign this case to a different judge.

The last ruling certified the merits of the Public Trust claim to the Nevada Supreme Court for determination because it would involve a question of Nevada state water law: whether the State, under the “public trust doctrine,” could reallocate senior water rights to the Walker River held by farmers in order to restore the ecology of Walker Lake through guaranteeing minimum flows to reach the Lake. Inflows of fresh water would help reduce the high levels of dissolved solids and allow fish to survive once again in Walker Lake. There are good precedents, such as in 1983 when the California Supreme Court ruled that the public trust doctrine did apply to Mono Lake and subsequently diversions from LADWP were adjusted to protect the Mono Lake ecosystem.

In the meantime, the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation has used Congressionally appropriated funds to buy a significant amount of water rights from upriver farmers. Unfortunately, the transfer of water rights to Walker Lake has been blocked by the unresolved legal issues. The Appeals Court ordered that restoration efforts can move forward without delay. For more information on these rulings, follow this link: https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/9th-circuit-ruling-on-walker-lake-puts-far-reaching-water-rights-issue-before-nevada-supreme-court.

Mother Nature is also helping to reverse the environmental damages to Walker Lake with the last two good rainy years in the Walker River watershed. Walker Lake levels have increased 13 feet from November 16, 2016 to June 4, 2018. Its current level is 3,920 feet, well on the way to restoring ecosystem health to the Lake.

Is Walker Lake saved? The answer awaits a ruling by the Nevada Supreme Court on whether the public trust doctrine applies to Walker Lake, the successful deliveries of water to the Lake, and more good rainy years.

Yucca Mountain — Three decades & still a concern for Nevadans

I WANT TO UPDATE CHAPTER members on some recent developments with regard to Yucca Mountain, Nevada, 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas. The area was designated by a Congressional act in 1987 to be the long-term repository for high-level nuclear waste from civilian nuclear reactors.

Total civilian nuclear waste of this high-level caliber is much larger than military waste of the same caliber, and over 70,000 metric tons of it has piled up in water cooling pools or in dry-cask storage on the surface near nuclear power plants.

In the 1987 act, Congress designated Yucca Mountain as the site, but several factors have thus far stalled the project.

(1) Adaman resistance by the State of Nevada and by its Congressional delegation to becoming the dumping place for the nation’s high-level nuclear waste.

(2) Inability of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to guarantee the safety of Yucca Mountain and of the transport systems and routes which would carry the nuclear waste from over 70 sites to Yucca Mountain.

(3) In 2009, the Obama administration cancelled funding for the project.

However, in 2017 the Trump administration expressed interest in reviving the licensing procedure and Congress has recently acted to enable this. In combination with State of Nevada to reject the Yucca Mountain site. This was ignored in the House, but its future in the Senate is unknown.

The writer of this article is a member of a Citizen Club working group that is looking into current problems and solutions for high-level nuclear waste. Much of our discussion has focused on matters other than Yucca Mountain, but we have noted some new problems with the current plan to store the waste there. One item of concern is over “high-burnup fuel.” The reactors now routinely burn the uranium fuel to a higher degree than before, leaving the waste actually hotter. Yucca Mountain was not specifically designed to accommodate the presence of high-burnup fuel, and its interaction with currently approved safety systems is not fully known.

Another item of concern is the safety of the transportation of spent nuclear fuel from over 70 sites nationwide to the proposed repository site. Many unanswered questions about transportation safety need study.

Recommended reading!

Coyote America

by Dan Flores

See review by David von Seggern at Coyote America via this link: https://www.amazon.com/review/R126DJ39U1QEF/ref=pe_1098610_13716200_cm_nv_eml_rv0_rv – contributed by David von Seggern
Dancing with Sagebrush

BY ROSE STRICKLAND

Over 27,500 acres burned in the 2017 project, which was located off of Hwy 50 near Fallon, early on a cold day in March. The project was important because the wildfire had burned so hot that very little native vegetation was left and invasive grasses were already replacing native species. Our first job was to count the seedlings, grown in the seeds to success prison program, in the stacked boxes. Rather than the initial estimate of 2000 seedlings, we counted close to 6000! In the meantime, BLM staff laid out planting plots surrounding the active sage lek in order to establish some cover for grouse; the BLM fire crew did not cut or remove burning holes in which to plant the seedlings. Then, the rest of us began the dance of a seedling, site training, and then moving a couple of feet to the next augered hole with another seedling. How many ways can one get up and down dozens of times, moving through the plots? Some moved gracefully at first, others scooted and some simply bent from the waist to plant the seedlings. The BLM staff told us that this area will be fenced and temporarily rest from springing so that the range has a chance to restabilize vegetation. We are all hoping that the spring rains this year drenched the site.

Despite the very sore muscles we had over the next couple of days, we decided that participating in the sagebrush seedling dance was worth the aches and pains.

To view a YouTube video of the restoration project, go to: https://youtu.be/wMRS3MzXYxY.

The CNRCC Desert Committee's purpose is to work for protection, preservation, and conservation of California/Nevada desert All Desert Committee activities, unless stated otherwise, are suitable for anyone who enjoys the outdoors. The average car or high clearance vehicle will be adequate for most trips. For questions about, or to sign up for, a particular outing, please contact leader listed in write-up. To receive outings list by e-mail, please contact Karen Allen (kallena96@gmail.com, 661-944-4056).

Sierra Club volunteers from Reno and Carson City drove to the restoration site, which was located off of Hwy 50 near Fallon, early on a cold day in March. The project was important because the wildfire had burned so hot that very little native vegetation was left and invasive grasses were already replacing native species. Our first job was to count the seedlings, grown in the seeds to success prison program, in the stacked boxes. Rather than the initial estimate of 2000 seedlings, we counted close to 6000! In the meantime, BLM staff laid out planting plots surrounding the active sage lek in order to establish some cover for grouse; the BLM fire crew did not cut or remove burning holes in which to plant the seedlings. Then, the rest of us began the dance of a seedling, site training, and then moving a couple of feet to the next augered hole with another seedling. How many ways can one get up and down dozens of times, moving through the plots? Some moved gracefully at first, others scooted and some simply bent from the waist to plant the seedlings. The BLM staff told us that this area will be fenced and temporarily rest from springing so that the range has a chance to restabilize vegetation. We are all hoping that the spring rains this year drenched the site.

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What is polystyrene?

Polystyrene is derived from a liquid hydrocarbon called styrene. When heated, thousands of small units of styrene bond together into long chains, creating a polymer material that’s solid when it cools to room temperature.

The most commonly used is polystyrene foam. This is the material that is used for shipping and packaging materials, fast food containers, water cups, egg cartons, etc.

What is polystyrene foam?

Polystyrene foam is derived from a liquid hydrocarbon called styrene. When heated, thousands of small units of styrene bond together into long chains, creating a polymer material that is solid when it cools to room temperature. There are different forms of polystyrene but perhaps surprisingly, the most commonly used is polystyrene foam.

Why is it so popular?

It’s easy to see why. Please see STYROFOAM, page 7.

Southern Nevada Group Calendar

All phone numbers are 702 unless otherwise noted. All hikes and service projects are led by certified outings leaders.

(Please use email when leaders state that they prefer email, especially if you have a long distance telephone number.)

A full calendar of our outdoor activities can be found online at www.sierra-club.org/toiyabe/southern-nevada. You can also visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/sierraclub.sng, and please “like” our page.

JULY 2 (MONDAY)

Upper Bristlecone Trail Loop. This hike in Mt. Charleston area will take us upon Upper Bristlecone Trail loop by way of Bonanza trail and No Name trail. Distance: 5 mi. Gain: 1000 ft. Mod. pace. This is a training hike to get in shape for next two Saturday hikes on South Loop Trail. Leader: David Morrow (david.brenda.morrow@gmail.com, 702-703-9486).

JULY 7 (SATURDAY)

South Loop Trail (1). Again in Mt. Charleston area, this hike will take us on South Loop Trail to Griffith Peak. Distance: 10 mi. Gain: 3400 ft. Mod. strenuous. Leader: David Morrow (david.brenda.morrow@gmail.com, 702-703-9486).

JULY 14 (SATURDAY)

South Loop Trail (2). Once more in Mt. Charleston area, we’ll take South Loop Trail to Griffith Peak. Distance: 10 mi. Gain: 3000 ft. Mod. strenuous. Leader: David Morrow (david.brenda.morrow@gmail.com, 702-703-9486).

JULY 28 (SATURDAY)

Group Picnic & Hike at Mt Charleston. Join us to escape the summer heat on Saturday, July 28, for a picnic at Spring Mountain Visitors’ Gateway at Mt. Charleston. In the morning we will drive up via carpool. Participants will have an opportunity to take an easy hike, if they wish, and explore Spring Mountains. Then, around noon, we’ll provide a free picnic lunch and information about the Sierra Club’s current activities and committees. Bring the whole family. Children and pets welcome! Contact vinny.spotleson@gmail.com or call 702-285-6588.

JULY 13 (MONDAY)

Juniper Trail/Step Ladder Loop. Hike from near Hilltop Campground to Step Ladder loop parking lot across from Spring Mountain Visitors Center. About 6 mi one way, elevation loss 1600 feet. Part of trail runs below Deer Creek Road. Scenic views along the way. Moderate (2 of 5). Provisional leader: Vern Quever (vqvrbuf@hotmail.com, 715-587-4341), with Geologist Nick Saines, Certified Leader, assisting.

AUGUST 19-25 (SUNDAY-SATURDAY)

Bryce Canyon NP Service Project. We’ll work with National Park Service to clear dead trees at Rainbow Point, to reduce fire hazard and restore natural habitat. We’ll also be nipping rabbit brush in meadow below, so that Utah prairie dogs can have a clear view of predators. Camping out at Sunset Campground; Park Service will provide all tools and safety equipment. Mod. difficulty, Level 3. Provisional leader: Stan Peyton (stapneyon@gmail.com, 702-347-3331).

AUGUST 25 (SATURDAY)

Hike to Fletcher Peak via North Loop. This hike follows North Loop close to Rain Tree and then we take trail to Fletcher Peak, where we will have a full view of Kyle canyon and mountain Charleston. About 7 mi round trip and a 2500 feet of gain. Level 5. Strenuous. Leader: Sasson Jahan (sasson702@gmail.com, 702-499-9218).

SEPTEMBER 1-3 (SATURDAY - MONDAY)

Telescope Peak Campout. Two-night car camp at Telescope Peak Wild Rose campground, with day hike to Telescope Peak. About 14 mi RT. Gain: 3000 feet. A marvelous hike with 360-degree views of surrounding desert and mountain ranges, such as Charleston Peak and

The Mojave Monitor

Southern Nevada Group

Group News

Come to the Clubhouse

July 5 (Thursday) or September 5 (Wednesday)

– Dark in August –

ExCom Meetings. All members are welcome to attend the monthly meetings of our Executive Committee (ExCom), which are typically held on the first Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise noted. We meet from 5:30pm to 8pm at the Sierra Club Office, located just near Springs Preserve and Meadows Mall. The address is 3828 Meadows Lane, Las Vegas, NV 89107. There’s lots of free parking in the surrounding lot. Please join us on July 5 (Thu) or September 5; dark in August.

Group Membership Event in the Mountains. Our Group Meet-
A tale of two Fletcher Canyon Outings with Las Vegas ICO
BY BARBARA GERHARDT

The accounts of two separate outings to Fletcher Canyon with two different groups in May provides insights into the mission of Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO) and how our trips help to enrich the lives of underserved valley youth. In these two stories you will learn how, in their own way, these two groups bonded with nature.

Outing 1: An amazing pinyon pine & colorful creatures along the trail

On Saturday, May 5, as thermometers in the Las Vegas valley were inching upwards toward what promised to be an early heat wave, eight youngsters, ages 8-14, from Walnut Recreation Center escaped to the cool, aromatic forest of Spring Mountain National Recreation Area.

We hiked Fletcher Canyon Trail, with our goal being the slot canyon and the water carved “slide” chute, two miles in. Within the first five minutes of our hike, it became clear that there was no way we would ever reach the slot canyon, but that the change of plans wasn’t a bad thing. For all eight youngsters, this was their very first visit to the Mt. Charleston area and they were enthralled with absolutely EVERYTHING they saw.

We could not walk more than 20 feet before they wanted to stop and explore a rock, a flower, a pinecone, a bush, a tree. When one of them discovered a single-leaf pinyon pine cone that had mature nuts they were amazed. We talked about the reproduction process of the pine tree, how native peoples used the nuts; and, of course, that they are a favorite food of squirrels.

We pushed on for about a mile. Then, as their energy and interest in hiking waned, we stopped for lunch and free exploration time. No surprise that there was plenty of energy for free exploring and even attempting to build a fort. On the hike back, they were thrilled by a sighting of a large dark-colored lizard and a beautiful yellow and black butterfly. No, this group did not reach the chute, but their journey proved to be rich, rewarding, and satisfying.

Outing 2: A talking deer, hail on the trail, & chuteing the chute

Seven youngsters from Pearson Recreation Center, aged 11-15, who had been on previous ICO trips, experienced magical moments and thrills and chills on their outing to Fletcher Canyon on May 19.

As we were ready to cross the highway to the trailhead, we had an unexpected chilly thrill as hail rained down on us! We jumped back in our vehicles in hopes that it would be a quick shower -- which it was.

Now, with a bit older group, I started the hike at a brisk pace to make sure we’d get to the end of the canyon and the slide chute this time. About two thirds of a mile up the trail, we were gifted with the sight of a doe. She was meandering through the forest munching here and there, then stopped onto the trail and stayed eating in full view for several minutes. The kids went immediately into hush mode and were entranced by that magical moment. One youth commented, “...when she made eye contact with me,” she was talking to me.”

As we continued hiking through terrain which didn’t change much, I began hearing complaints...“my legs hurt”, “my feet hurt”, and “can’t we stop?”. Needless to say, we stopped several times for drink and snack breaks! Then the vegetation began to change as we reached the now (unfortunately) dry creek bed and a jungly area of thick green plants. It was as if someone turned on the energizer bunny switch and up the trail they roared. One boy yelled, “I feel like Tarzan!”

After that, I never heard another complaint about legs hurting. When we stopped for lunch in the first canyon, one girl commented, “The canyon wall looks like it will fall on me!” After lunch, we explored the second canyon and reached our play destination, the chute. Numerous slides down the chute were punctuated with cheers of joy.
Next highway cleanup, Wednesday, July 18, 8-11am. Meet at Crestview Rest Area at 8am. Helmets, gloves, bags, and pick-up tongs provided. Snacks and “Best Find” contest to follow. For more information contact rhina@skidmore.edu.

Conglomerate Mesa Update. BLM just gave Silver Standard the go ahead to drill for water to irrigate. LADWP quickly withdrew that request when CDFW pointed out that a CEQA was in order. The leases to renew their grazing leases, while with letters to the Mayor of Los Angeles and RoLG will too. The Mono County geology Board is collecting comments on the need to change metallic mining backfill regulations. We believe that if the regulations were revisited they would be weakened, not strengthened. This would encourage more gold mining ventures in California.

The comment period currently is to end July 13. To join us in protecting this great place, contact Fran Hunt at fran.hunt@sierraclub.org and see article on page 1.

Water wars! We will be fighting them from here out with global warming. The latest is LADWP’s offer to local ranchers to renew their grazing leases, while withholding water to irrigate. LADWP quickly withdrew that request when CDFW pointed out that a CEQA was in order. The leases that are affected cover Long Valley, which has the largest subpopulation of Bi-State Sage Grouse, Little Round Valley, and Round Valley. Mono County has responded with letters to the Mayor of Los Angeles and RoLG will too. The Mono County letters lay out the issues well: https://www.mono-county.ca.gov/sites/default/files/file-attachments/board_of_supervisors/meeting/29173/04-19-18-v2.pdf.

What else is the Range of Light Group up to? We now have four ongoing projects.

BLUE DIAMOND PROJECT: ROLG has been restoring the historic Nordic ski trails of the 1980s. These un-groomed ski routes through the forest in the Mammoth Knolls, Inyo Craters, and Obsidian Dome. Skiers follow blue, diamond-shaped signs on trees. The USFS recently approved an extension to one of the routes so you will may see us carrying ladders through the forest this summer to get the signs up. Maps of the routes are available at the USFS Mammoth Visitor Center. Contact Mary Shore at marymikeshore@gmail.com.

100% RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT: ROLG has partnered with 350Mono.org and Citizens Climate Lobby to ask the Town of Mammoth Lakes to commit to 100% clean energy by 2050. There are 2 great sources available to Mammoth—solar and geothermal. However, there are obstacles to both, but we’re willing to work through them. You don’t have to be a Mammoth resident to help. Contact Lynn Boultou at chairrolg@gmail.com.

TANGLE FREE WATERS PROJECT: ROLG is partnering with Friends of the Inyo, Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care, USFS, Fish and Game Commission and others to get fishing line out of the lakes and keep it out. We will be setting up fishing line tubes for collection and recycling and more. Contact Janet Barth wesawone@gmail.com.

BOHLER CANYON RECOVERY PROJECT: ROLG is documenting the recovery of Bohler Canyon after a forest fire swept through in August. The group has gone up every fall and spring since the fire, taking photos and entering the plans that return in Inaturalist. The aspen grove is coming back from the roots and is now a dense thicket of 7’ tall aspens. It may take decades before competition needs out most and a few leaders grow tall creating the aspen grove that was once there.

What you can do. Come join us – we can use your help! Other ways you can volunteer:
• lead hikes
• plan our monthly meeting activities/speakers
• organize a connect-youth-to-nature activity or youth scholarship program
• join our Executive Committee (ExCom)

Next ROLG ExCom Meeting:
Join us on Thursday, July 12, 5:30-7:30 pm at the Clark’s home. Open to all members. Come talk to your ExCom and let us know what we can do better. Contact wmwalcolm.clark@gmail.com for directions.

Range of Light Outings

Range of Light Group News

BY JOANNE & DICK HINH, ROLG OUTINGS CO-CHAIRS

ROLG SUMMER 2018 OUTINGS

ALL OUTINGS INCLUDE CONSERVATION EDUCATION ACTIVITIES!
All phone numbers are 760 unless otherwise noted.
CST 208/776-40. Registration as seller of travel does not constitute approval by State of California.

We are not able to list all outings for July - September at this time. Please check for outings at the locations listed below.

CHECKING FOR UPDATES. In addition to contact information listed in the Trails, check for updates on:
• our WEBSITE at <www.sierraclub.org/toiyabe-range-light>
• on MEETUP at <http://www.meetup.com/ROLG-SierraClub-Outings-Meetup/>
• in LOCAL MEDIA (newspapers, etc.)

SATURDAY & SUNDAY SUMMER OUTINGS

Longer hikes varying in difficulty (moderate to strenuous). Bring water, lunch and snacks, layered clothing, appropriate hiking footwear, hat, sunscreen, bug spray, working headlamp or flashlight, and desired personal items such as cameras, binoculars, and hiking poles. Contact leader for permission to bring your dog. Abominable weather cancels.

WHAT TO BRING
For All outings, bring water, lunch and snacks, layered clothing, appropriate hiking footwear/skis, snowshoes, sunscreen, bug spray in summer, and desired personal items such as cameras, binoculars, and hiking poles.

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