



Sierra Uplift

Newsletter of the Sierra Club, Sierra Nevada Group

Friday, January 20 General Meeting • Seaman's Lodge, Pioneer Park

Documentary: *Dream People of the Amazon*



Nevada City film maker Larry Lansburgh will show his latest documentary, *Dream People of the Amazon*, and speak after the screening.

Dream People of the Amazon tells the story of the Achuar, indigenous people who live in a remote part of the Amazon rain forest in southeastern Ecuador. The Achuar had no contact with the outside world until the early 1970's. But by the early 1990's, the Achuar had learned that under their own territory lies oil, which the outside world wants. So, as they have for time beyond memory, the Achuar looked

to their dreams for guidance.

Dream People of the Amazon is the first film the Achuar people have allowed to be made in their territory. Overcoming their shyness of cameras, they share with us their knowledge, customs, and spiritual beliefs. We learn how their dreams and alliances have protected their forest — and can help guide all of us.

Larry Lansburgh's film awards are numerous. He and his wife, Sarah, have lived in Nevada City since 1992 and have served on the boards of the Foothill Theatre Company and the Rural Quality Coalition.

Please join us at 6:30 for a potluck supper; program begins at 7:30.

Friday, February 17 General Meeting • Seaman's Lodge, Pioneer Park

Sierra Club's California Solar Project



The Sierra Club's "California Solar Project" is coming to our meeting in Nevada City! A combined effort of the Sierra Club, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Service Employees International Union, and UNITE-HERE!, the CSP's mission is to take action against global warming while creating high-quality employment and increasing union representation in the solar industry.

Woody Hastings, CSP project director, will update us on current tax credits and rebates which help Sierra Club members go solar. And why solar now? For every kilowatt of solar electrical power that replaces power from a coal-fired plant, there are up to 3 pounds less CO₂ put into the atmosphere, according to the US DOE. That makes solar technology a powerful way to counter global warming.

This will be a good opportunity to learn the details of what the CSP has to offer. We urge you to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the California Solar Project.

If you are unable to attend the presentation and would like information, please contact Woody Hastings, CSP Project Director, at 415-285-3824, or <whastings@californiasolarproject.org>. But we hope to see you there! A 6:30 potluck dinner precedes the 7:30 program.

Sierra Uplift

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Find national and local Sierra Club
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<www.sierraclub.org>

<www.sierraclub.org/ca>

<www.motherlode.sierraclub.org>

<www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/sierranevada>

SNG is a member of the

Sierra Nevada Alliance, a

regional coalition of groups. See

<www.sierranevadaalliance.org>

Barbara Rivenes: Chair Chat

Opportunities for 2006 include helping to shape smart growth



New Year's greetings! I hope that some of you have made a New Year's resolution to join our activities in 2006. It's never too late to become part of the Management Team and enjoy the benefits of leadership, camaraderie, good gossip and good will. The Team (or Executive Committee) meets monthly, plans meetings and events, discusses issues of community interest and concern, agrees on strategy to address issues and attempts to be a

positive force in the community.

We were fortunate to again enlist Charlie Chisholm to be a candidate for the Management Team and to welcome Lois Shelton as a candidate offering to help. Their candidate statements are on the ballot giving you a chance to know them better.

I believe our Group may have some challenges and opportunities in the coming year. The challenges to be grappled with are not new and they are almost before us. The Grass Valley City Council is getting ready to begin deliberation on the timetable for four annexation proposals, as well as the re-opening and operation of the Idaho-Maryland mine. All these proposals may present opportunities to work with developers, planners and officials to help shape the scale and scope of the projects, to urge full mitigation of environmental impacts and to offer an alternative vision for Nevada County.

Regional conservation planning bodies of the Sierra Club in California have been developing guidelines to aid in determining how Sierra Club can promote healthy communities by fostering growth principles that minimize negative effects on the natural environment, agriculture and human health. We can be positive about projects which encompass responsible growth; perhaps a subset of the highly visible "smart growth" guidelines, but not embracing all aspects in all settings. The guidelines are not fully developed at this writing, but will include such items as: *is the project located within infill? is it served by public transit? will it minimize vehicle miles traveled considering air pollution impacts? is it pedestrian and bicycle friendly? does it have inclusionary zoning for affordable housing? does it include high density residential, mixed-use, neighborhood retail? and is it fully funded for all infrastructure costs?*

A caucus of local groups, including SNG, has developed Principles for Good Growth in Nevada County

—continued next page

Barbara Rivenes: Chair Chat —from page 2

Gregg Olson and I have been working with a caucus of local groups who are looking at the impacts of the proposed annexations. As part of the group we developed Principles for Good Growth in Nevada County that you may read on our website (go to <www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/sierranevada> and click on Politics). Also on the website are texts of the letters from the participating organizations sent to the Grass Valley City Council regarding the Economic Study for the four annexations.

If you have concerns or questions about the positions taken by the Sierra Nevada Group, I urge you to join in the discussions and become involved. ■

Olivia Diaz**Come join my Quiz Team**

Do you know arcane or trivial facts or have expertise in history, science, people, places or things? Do you like puzzles and riddles? The Sierra Nevada Group is looking for seven people to make a team for the SYRCL fourth annual Brains of Nevada County Quiz Night on Saturday, February 4.

It is a fund raising event for SYRCL, so the team members have to pay their admission for the evening of desserts, drinks and brain twisters. Funds support the Laura Wilcox Scholarship. Our team will compete to answer questions and accumulate the highest score. I've heard it is a lot of fun.

I know movies but not TV and would like to form a team with people who have different kinds of expertise. Won't you join me on the SNG Quiz Team? Phone Olivia Diaz at 470-8303. ■

The Run Through the Colors: Volunteers make it happen

The success of the **Run Through the Colors** depends on the efforts of a large group of dedicated volunteers, many who return year after year. Many of them serve in more than one capacity, both in the preparation for and during the race. We want to send our thanks to all this year's volunteers and will attempt to list them here. Please forgive any oversights and errors (and let us know about them).

—Theresa and Richard Thomas

Our thanks to: Wendy Thibeault (food leader), Edith Lufkin and Carol Wright (course leaders), Celia Thomas (results leader), Charlie Arens, Sharon Bailey-Bok, Curtis Bok, Charlotte Bolinger, Carle Bumpass, Joan Bumpass, Walt Carnahan, Teresa Carli, Charlie Chisholm, Karen Cox, Al DeVecchio, Jeanne Duerst, Allan Eberhart, Howie Elders, Peter Elias, Donna Foote, Jerry Foote, Walt Fraser, Kent Gallagher, Jeff Gillarde, Peter Graff, Sue Graff, Karen Grosskrevtz, Bob Goar, Sue Haddon, Karl Hillerman, Rachel Hillerman, Ralph Hitchcock, Linda Horning, Phil Horning, Lori Hukill, Jim Hurley, Nik Jedonoff, Gary Johnson, Kathleen Kershaw, Chris Krugler, Rose Mary Levin, Mary Link, Bo Littig, Rianne Lovett, Nancy Lowenger, Shirley Lyon, Susan Mahaffey, Carol Miller, Lily Marie, Gary Moon, Susan Murphy, Steve Nicola, David Niedziejko, Jim Olson, Joanne Olson, Frank Pedrick, Howard Peterson, Cynthia Pierce, Barbara Rivenes, Don Rivenes, Paul Sokoloff, Will Stockwin, Barbara Tanner, Mary Tendall, Wendy Thompson, Butch Thresh, Virginia Thresh, John Tomisser, June Ungerhauer, and Nancy Weber.

We would like to add a special tip of our running caps to GB Tucker who was unable to help us this year, but who has helped mightily with all the previous 13 races.

Thank you Sponsors!
Run Through the Colors 2005

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Katie Carter

Wild Mountain Yoga

WANTED! Photos of the 2005 Run through the Colors

for the Sierra Nevada Group web page. Send them to Ernie at <malamud@foothill.net>. Thanks.

Karen Cox

Conservation Report



In honor of the New Year I am offering you several opportunities to let your voice be heard on these environmental issues, or at least to let your words be read.

National Park management

A new management policy being considered for the National Park Service may reduce environmental protection and boost commercial interests. Much of the new policy can be traced back to a controversial document written last summer by Paul Hoffman, currently an assistant secretary in the Interior Department, formerly an aide to then-Wyoming Congressman Dick Cheney. The rules will weaken the mandate that emphasized preservation over recreational enjoyment, allowing increased air and noise pollution, snowmobiling, jet skiing and livestock grazing. The draft policy is available online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/waso>. Comments will be accepted on the plan until Jan. 19.

Mining Law changes

US Rep. Richard Pombo R-Calif. has continued his crusade against environmental regulations by including provisions in the budget bill that could allow large tracts of federal land to be bought. The estimate of the number of acres at risk vary from 350,000 to 5.7 million acres. The provision would lift an 11-year moratorium on mining patents and once again allow mining companies to buy public lands. It would also eliminate a long-standing requirement that mining companies prove that there are valuable mineral deposits before they stake a claim. That means a real estate developer, casino or ski resort could file a claim and buy public land. Most national parks are protected from new mining claims but Joshua Tree, Yosemite and Death Valley have mineral claims that predate the establishment of the park and so would be at risk.

John Leshy, a senior lawyer in the Interior Department under Clinton said the legislation "doesn't have much to do with mining at all. It has to do with real estate transfer for economic development". When the budget passed the House in November the mining provision was little noticed and buried in the 187-page budget bill. Since that time people have become aware of the threat and it is hoped that the Senate will reject the mining provision when it goes to the House-Senate conference committee. You could let your senators know how you feel about the issue.

Editor's note: at press time, because of the mounting opposition from Western senators, the mining law changes were removed from the budget bill, as they were jeopardizing its passage. The issue however bears watching, as it may not be dead yet.

Endangered Species Act

Rep. Richard Pombo has also authored a bill under the misleading title "Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act of 2005". Passed by the House on a 229 to 193 vote the act would eliminate all critical habitat protections for species such as the spotted owl, desert tortoise, etc. The bill would exempt pesticides from environmental review and cripple how science is used to list species as endangered. It would also pay off developers to not violate the law. You can see the text of HR3824 at <http://resourcescommitt.house.gov/>.

BLM herbicide use

The Bureau of Land Management is proposing to triple their current annual herbicide use in the western states which would result in spraying on 932,000 acres. BLM feels that the benefits of getting rid of invasive weeds outweighs the possible damage to the land, people and animals. You can see the BLM's Draft PEIS for Herbicide Vegetation Treatment at <http://www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/VegEIS/>. BLM will accept comments postmarked by January 9. ■

Ernie Malamud and David Simon

Clair Tappaan Lodge meets fundraising goal

Clair Tappaan Lodge (CTL), the Sierra Club's much-beloved rustic lodge near Donner Summit, has raised over \$100,000 and its Executive Committee is turning its attention to increasing occupancy levels.

The Club's Board of Directors issued the \$100,000 challenge to CTL's Executive Committee in late 2004. By the September 30, 2005 deadline \$126,305 had been raised, 25% more than the challenge. The August fundraiser jointly sponsored by our group and the Tahoe Area group raised approximately \$12,000 of this total.

The Board of Directors also challenged the Lodge to increase its occupancy to the breakeven point in 2006. Historically the Lodge has attracted 11,000 visitors per year, resulting in a loss of approximately \$100,000. In 2005, occupancy is projected to reach 12,000 visitors. Breakeven is between 14,000 and 15,000.

To attract an additional 3,000 visitors, the Clair Tappaan Executive Committee will continue to work with Miramar, the firm with day-to-day management responsibility for the Lodge, to fill beds during summer, autumn, and midweek days in winter. To achieve this goal substantial volunteer help will be needed. The committee is working to increase the number of volunteered activities at the Lodge, such as hikes, stargazing, wine-tasting, bird watching, biology, history and botany, both on weekends and during the week.

The Lodge has made its facilities attractive for meetings and retreats for Sierra Club entities, church groups, scouts, and school groups. The Lodge has a nice projector (for power point presentations or slide shows) and there are several comfortable spaces for breakout sessions.

The committee is exploring the possibility of running an environmental-education program at the Lodge. Our ability to provide meals and classroom spaces makes the Lodge attractive, and it is an especially appropriate spot for studying several of the science and history subjects in the California State Curriculum Standards.

What you can do to assure the future of CTL

Come visit! If you've never been to Clair Tappaan, you don't know what you've been missing. CTL is part of our neighborhood. From Nevada City or Grass Valley we can zip up to CTL in an hour or so. Drive up and have dinner! If you've never used snowshoes rent a pair there and learn. For winter weekends, make your reservations early; the Lodge tends to fill up. Consider visiting during the week in winter; you avoid the traffic, and you get a discount on your stay as well. For information about staying at the Lodge, visit <www.ctl.sierraclub.org> or call (800) 679-6775.

Volunteer to keep the Lodge going

There are jobs with all levels of time commitment, especially for

activity leaders and for enthusiastic volunteers to help contact groups that might like to stay at the Lodge. To volunteer, contact Tony Loftin at <hikingtony@earthlink.net>.

Use the Lodge often, volunteer your skills to help the Lodge, talk it up among friends and groups and help preserve this Sierra Club jewel.

We plan to hold our May 19 SNG General Membership meeting at the Lodge. ■


Ernie Malamud is a 54-year member of the Sierra Club and began visiting CTL in 1951. David Simon is past Sierra Club Vice President for Outdoor Activities and a member of the Loma Prieta (San Francisco Peninsula) Chapter.



photo by Paul McKown

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Action item

The debate over genetically engineered plants and animals becomes a battle in the California state legislature

The following article was submitted by Olga Mandrussow, a member of the Sierra Club Genetic Engineering Committee. She can be contacted at (916) 457-4783 or <OMandrussow@yahoo.com>. The resources that Olga lists at the end of this article offer a rich and timely education on an alarmingly pressing issue.

Imagine a biotechnology corporation coming into your region, discovering a native plant, artificially injecting genes from a completely different species into that plant, and then producing a new product for its market. Does the corporation have the right to privatize and patent its product? Yes.

Consider this. Ventria Bioscience wanted to grow pharmaceutical-producing rice (pharm rice) in California. This rice, genetically engineered with human genes to produce lactoferrin and lysozyme, would be used as a pharmaceutical-producing crop. Dr. Michael Hansen, senior research associate at Consumers Union's Consumer Policy Institute, when interviewed by *The Scientist* regarding the potential spread of pharm genes, stated, "There are unanswered environmental and human health issues regarding the two proteins."

Farmers are concerned with the potential contamination of their commercial crops, as well as lost markets. If a farmer's crop is contaminated by genetically engineered organisms (GEO),

the farmer has no legal recourse. Even worse, the biotech industry has sued farmers when their farmland becomes the victim of gene flow. Organic farmers can lose their organic certification when genes carrying genetically engineered traits spread onto organic cropland.

Tinkering with genetic codes, the fundamental building blocks of all life on the planet, is asking for trouble. The good news is that we, the residents of California, can act in favor of a needed moratorium.

Ordinances have been passed in several counties in California that prohibit the planting of genetically engineered crops. But when biotechnology corporations realized the power of local communities, they lobbied state lawmakers to introduce legislation preempting local control of seeds and plants, as well as rendering existing ordinances null and void.

Legislative showdown: preempting local law

Late in the 2005 legislative session, preemption legislation was introduced. California bills AB1508 and SB1056 aim to strip local regulation of food crops. These bills were stalled due to tremendous citizen opposition, but are slated to be heard again in the 2006 legislative session.

It is up to each and every one of us to make certain we retain the rights to allow our communities to create a sustainable vision for our food supply.

Please voice your support

for local democracy and control over our food and agriculture by voicing your opposition to AB1508 and SB1056. Visit: <www.calgefree.org/preemption.shtml#Takeaction>

Additional Resources:

Contact your Legislator:

<<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html>>

Tool kit: <<http://www.environmentalcommons.org/local-control-toolkit.pdf>>

<<http://www.environmentalcommons.org/local-control-toolkit.pdf>>

More info: <<http://www.calgefree.org/resources/consumers.shtml>>

<<http://www.calgefree.org/resources/consumers.shtml>>

SIERRA CLUB POLICY

excerpted from <<http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/biotech.asp>>

The Sierra Club urges full public disclosure, discussion and evaluation of the potential hazards and benefits and policy options for genetic engineering research and the development and use of products from that research. We urge the development of adequate regulatory, legislative, and other controls and that these decisions be based on a reverence for nature and life...

In accordance with the Precautionary Principle, we call for a moratorium on the planting of all genetically engineered crops and the release of all GEOs into the environment, including those now approved. Releases should be delayed until extensive, rigorous research is done which determines the long-term environmental and health impacts of each GEO and there is public debate to ascertain the need for the use of each GEO intended for release into the environment.

Sierra Uplift

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of the SIERRA CLUB
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Grass Valley, CA

2006 Season

We are organizing a varied and interesting program for the 2006 season — we hope you can attend!

General meetings

Friday evenings
Seaman's Lodge, Nevada City
6:30 Dinner potluck
7:30 Program

January 20

Larry Lansburgh
Documentary film and commentary:
Dream People of the Amazon

February 17

Woody Hastings
Sierra Club's California Solar Project

Reserve the dates!

March 17

April 21

May 19

For details see our web page
<<http://motherlode.sierraclub.org/SierraNevada>>.

Regular Committee Meetings

- **Conservation & Management Committee** Meets every fourth Monday, 6:30 p.m. at the SYRCL office, 216 Main St, Nevada City.

Local Outings

- A group meets Wed and Sat mornings at 9:00 am on Sutton Way just up from the Coldwell Banker office. They decide that morning where they are going and their hikes are easy to moderate (5-7 miles). Contact Clarence Motter at 274-3697 or Laurie Lile at 273-6406 for more information.
- Another group whose hikes are longer and more strenuous (6 to 12 miles) meets on Tues and Fri at 8:45 am on Sutton Way just up from the Coldwell Banker office. They also decide that morning where they are going to hike. Contact Robin DeNegri at 274-7985.
- And there is also the **Nevada County Hiking Club**. See <www.ncws.com/akh/hike/>