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Sierra Uplift

Newsletter of the Sierra Nevada Group of the Sierra Club

May- June 2003

Issue 7, Number 3

General Meeting

The Sierra Nevada Group of the Sierra Club

Coral Reefs: The Vanishing Rainbow

Curtis Bok and Sharon Bailey-Bok, self-described mad scuba divers and underwater naturalists, have logged nearly 1000 dives each in some of the richest marine faunas on Earth from the Great Barrier Reef to far eastern Indonesia and Papua New Guinea to the Maldives and the Red Sea. They keep life fish lists like some of us keep life bird lists. Their passion for exploring the living coral reefs and the complex habitats of creatures of incredible diversity has led to a deep love and appreciation for the importance and interconnectedness of these underwater realms with the web of life on land -- and a desire to share some of that understanding and to work for the protection of reefs worldwide. Curtis and Sharon are active supporters of The Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL), a non-profit organization that works to protect and manage coral reefs, establish coral parks, fund conservation efforts, and raise public awareness (www.coral.org).

Thriving coral reefs are home to at least as many species as the rainforests and the reefs are in at least as much danger of destruction, mostly from us humans. If current trends continue, 40% or more of the world's coral reefs may be lost by 2010 and another 20% by 2030. There are things that each of us can do to help protect the reefs in small ways that have an impact. So, come see some beautiful slides and learn a bit more about living reefs in our global watershed.

We invite you to join us for this slide show and discussion on Friday evening, May 16th, 2003.

Our delectable potluck begins at 6:30pm, the program begins at 7:30pm. Please bring utensils and a dish to share

Location: Seaman Hall at the west end of Pioneer Park, Nevada City. For more information call Carolyn Hinshaw at 477-1320



Chair Chatter

by Carolyn Hinshaw

Recently your Management Committee held a "brainstorming" session in which we forced our minds to cast off musty ideas and search out some new and inspiring replacements. Here are some of the results:

Outings

Revamp our Outings Program to include some joint outings with other like minded groups: SYRCL?, Nevada County Land Trust? , Audubon?

Start a Youth Outings section.

Have some outings in outlying areas where we have members (The Sierra Nevada Group includes all of Nevada County, part of Yuba County and part of Sierra County)

Other suggestions: more flexibility in destination (depending on weather we will go to x or y), weekday outings.

Fundraising

A garden walk this August (Tastes From the Garden) featuring veggie gardens and dishes from these gardens to sample.

A Outdoor Recreation Equipment yard sale next year. This will give members time to clean out their garages and get rid of that unused equipment that has been gathering dust. With almost 1200 members there might be quite a bit of equipment that is rarely used and can be donated.

Raffles at our general Meetings - perhaps a book, or a 50/50 raffle.

Membership

Possibly changing to monthly meetings rather than bi-monthly, marketing the meetings via email or postcards, asking for volunteers for set up and takedown, shortening presentations (40 min? With time for questions, discussion = 1 hr max) so meeting ends by 9pm. A couple of meetings at other locations, i.e.-Downieville, Yuba City.

Other Ideas

A project to be funded by a Grant Proposal, emphasizing youth, education, perhaps an interactive display, perhaps in partnership with another local environmental organization such as SYRCL, Yuba Watershed Council.

Some of these ideas seem quite intriguing and I would like to get some feedback from our membership on these suggestions, and would like to hear from anyone wishing to volunteer to help on any of these projects. Call me at 477-1320, email me at (carolynhinshaw@sbcglobal.net) or write to me c/o The Sierra Nevada Group, PO Box 1042, Nevada City, CA 95959

Conservation Committee Report

by Karen Cox



This month we have good news and not so good news. I will begin with the positive. At its April meeting the State Mining and Geology Board made its temporary "complete backfill" regulations permanent. Mining companies will be required to completely backfill all new open pit metallic mines in the state. The regulations reform mine reclamation and eliminate major environmental hazards associated with open pit gold mining. Mary Nichols, head of California's Resources Department testified in favor of the regulations. The California Mining Association was opposed.

More good news. The U.S. Forest Service retreated from a plan to heavily cut parts of two forests in order to study the effects of different logging levels on the California spotted owl. The study would have included 600,000 acres most of it in the Plumas and Lassen national forests. Originally it sounded as though the forest would be clear cut and then the study would determine if any owls were left. In announcing their change in plans the U.S. Forest Service acknowledged that they did not have sufficient public backing to proceed with the work in a timely fashion. They are currently redesigning the study.

Forest Stewardship. Under the heading of not such good news is the new law tacked on to the huge spending bill recently approved by Congress. The new law allows logging companies to cut large, commercially valuable trees on public forests in exchange for clearing smaller brush and smaller trees. The law allows the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM to issue 10-year contracts for clearance work with no limits on the size of the trees to be cut nor the number of acres to be cleared. The Bush administration calls the plan an innovative, cost-effective method of preventing forest fires. Environmentalists call it a license to steal and prefer the forest service concentrate on thinning small trees and undergrowth near where people live not in the middle of forests. The law was part of a 3,000 page bill which funds most of the non-defense related agencies for the current budget year. Most lawmakers didn't even know what they were voting on.

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SNG Outings

Sunday, May 18, 2003
Hike – Stevens Trail

A beautiful time of year to enjoy the beauty of the Stevens Falls and the American River. We plan to hike the 9 mile (moderate with elevations of 2400-1200 ft.) round trip between the trail head near Colfax and the river, enjoying the views along the way. Meet at 9am, return around 3-4 pm. Bring water, lunch and hiking gear. Friendly dogs welcome. Call Jean (477-7902) by Thurs., 5/15 to sign up (must have 4 sign ups or trip cancels).

Sunday, June 8, 2003
Bike Ride – American River Parkway

If enough people are interested (4 minimum), we will bike along the American River for about 20-25 miles starting out at Negro Bar. This relatively flat route is free of cars - which makes for a pleasant ride. Call Jean (477-7902) before 6/5 for details and to sign up.

GOT IDEAS?
... FOR A GREAT OUTING ????

Any special place you'd like to go?
Anything special you'd like to learn about our wonderful natural resources?

Call Jean (477-7902) or Carolyn (477-1320) and share your thoughts.

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CAR CO-OP FORMING

RS 2477. Under the heading of really bad news is the adoption of a new rule by the U.S. Dept. of Interior which facilitates the giveaway of federal lands to local governments. The 1866 mining law known as Revised Statute 2477 allows the BLM to disclaim federal ownership of lands so that jeep trails, footpaths, even waterways can be turned into roads, or opened to vehicles even if they are in national parks or wilderness. The new rule opens the floodgates for potentially thousands of so-called "highway" claims with no criteria in place to judge the validity of the claims. Places in danger of these claims include Sequoia National Forest, King Range National Conservation Area, the Mojave National Preserve, Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Park. Both of our Senators have asked Interior Secretary Gale Norton not to process any RS 2477 claims.

Lu Mellado, longtime bicycle commuter, wants a hybrid car to be the mainstay of a Community Car Co-op and has applied for a \$24,000 state grant to purchase a new Toyota Prius. Car co-ops allow the members to gain the benefits of driving a car without the costs and responsibilities of ownership. Members share the car payments, maintenance, vehicle repair and insurance with others. "Car sharing" is a great way to save money, reduce traffic congestion, and lower automobile emissions.

Anyone interested in becoming a Community Car Co-op member, or to be informed on any new developments of a car sharing program in and around Nevada County can contact Lu at 265-2918/day or 265-2962/evening or at lumellado@mac.com.

A Trip Down Memory Lane to the Clair Tappaan Lodge

Ernie Malamud

My first visits to CTL began in 1951 while an undergraduate at UC Berkeley. I went there often, learned to ski on the trails around the lodge or at Sugar Bowl. Those were the days of rope tows, T-bars, and no I-80. The frequent treks to Peter Grubb to spend the night took longer than now. To reach the Benson hut without a Mt. Lincoln lift we strapped on our skins, hooked our cable bindings on the front hitch and climbed up. At the top, off came the skins, they were wrapped around our waists, we admired the view, rehooked our bindings for downhill and continued on our way.

Once a small group of us returning from Peter Grubb got caught in a blizzard, with visibility only a few feet. We had one compass but each of us chose a different direction they thought would lead us back to Clair Tappaan. I was anointed as the leader and chose one of those directions. For hours we plodded blindly through the deep snow. Some in the group recited the Lord's Prayer as night approached. We kept worrying about the many cliffs we knew were somewhere in the vicinity. Suddenly there in front of us, ghostlike in the obscurity, was the back door to Clair Tappaan! It was a frightening experience but a great story to tell now. The Sierra Club was much smaller then and one frequently ran into club VIP's at the Lodge. One time I needed a ride back to the Bay Area and Dave Brower gave me a lift.

I moved back to California 2½ years ago and my wife and I began using CTL again, both summer and winter. Twice we celebrated Thanksgiving at CTL. We took

friends there who wanted to learn to snowshoe. The Lodge, the nearby huts, the beautiful surrounding mountains, the whole ambiance of the place represent what the Sierra Club is about: care for the environment, love of the outdoors and outdoor recreation, teaming with nice people to share the chores. In the peaceful atmosphere around the fireplace we met many friendly people from all over the country, people who share the same values we do. Sierra clubbers built the lodge and help maintain it. It can be the first place where people are introduced to the Sierra Club. The cost is low enough so families come; we see hordes of children learning to love the outdoors. It is part of our Sierra Club history and tradition. The percentage of the total club national membership who visit is hardly a criterion for judging its value.

I was alarmed when I recently learned in the *Bonanza* April/May issue of the alleged financial problems at CTL, of the outrageous threat to sell CTL, and a plan to let AYH manage it which fortunately has fallen through. Although I gather these discussions have been going on for some time, they certainly haven't been widely publicized. There is lots of professional talent and willing volunteers in Northern California and surely if the call for help had gone out people with different skills would have pitched in to help solve the problems. The current plan for *Miramar Hospitality* to manage CTL can work, but only if the Sierra Club retains full ownership of the Lodge and surrounding properties and sets clear goals and policy for *Miramar* to implement. These goals and policies must preserve the very special nature of this Sierra Club jewel. The Sierra Nevada Group (applies also to the Tahoe Group) have an opportunity and a responsibility. CTL is part of our neighborhood. Now that I-80 exists we can zip up to CTL in an hour or so and enjoy it. We also have a responsibility to help so that the special character of CTL is not lost.



Formation of a Youth Section within the Sierra Nevada Group

In order to remain at the forefront of efforts to protect our environment, the vigor and vitality of youthful participants is needed. Their point of view is also essential. Could/should the Sierra Nevada Group have an organized youth section within it? How can the Sierra Club attract young people? This note is to solicit comments and suggestions from our membership. A youth section is envisioned to be open to high school and college age people. It would be organized around a program of outings: ski trips (including snowboarding?), hikes, rock climbs etc. as well as programs with food and speaker. Field trips, perhaps with funding for the "yellow" bus provided by the club, could visit sites with interesting geology or unique flora or fauna. Members and non-members would be equally welcome. These activities would raise awareness among youth members about conservation issues and encourage those who would choose to become involved in the issues.



Your feedback on this suggestion will be appreciated. Call Carolyn Hinshaw at 477-1320, or Ernie Malamud at 470-8303, and let them know how you would like to participate.

YUBA COUNTY MEMBERS MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The six county Sacramento region will add another one million people during the next 30 years - how do we assure that we preserve the region's quality of life and protect the environment in the face of this growth?

A very important meeting is being conducted in Yuba County for citizen involvement in helping to plan for the expected growth in the region. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments [SACOG] is conducting a Blueprint Workshop in Yuba County on Thursday, May 22, 6:15pm-9:00pm, Feather River Center Rm 700, 6000 Lindhurst Ave, Marysville.

At this workshop they will take input from local residents addressing different scenarios for growth planning with the use of a high-tech interactive GIS computer program developed by UC Davis. This is your chance to influence growth planning in your area. An RSVP is requested for the workshop.

TO RSVP - and for more information, go to:

<http://www.sacog.org/landuse/dates.htm>

Or call Katie Hoffman at (916) 925-0130

Spirit of the Trees

Spirit of the Trees is a 90 minute video program exploring the link between trees and forests and Native American cultures across the United States. Catherine Busch-Johnston, local (Rough and Ready) director/videographer/editor, will present her program at the Center for the Arts, 314 W. Main Street, Grass Valley on May 1 at 8 p.m. KVIE will show the complete six part series later this year.



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of the Sierra Club
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Monthly Meetings

Conservation and Management Committee

Meets every 4th Monday at 6:30 p.m.
at the SYRCL office at 216 Main St.,
Nevada City.

Address Changes

Send old and new addresses to
Sierra Club Member Services
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80328-2968

Web Connections

Find national and local Sierra Club news by visiting
these web sites:

<http://www.sierraclub.org> and
<http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/sierranevada>

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