

September/October 2004



Friday September 17 · General Meeting · Seaman's Lodge, Pioneer Park, Nevada City

Securing Sierra Conservation in the 21st Century

A Perfect Storm of population projections and market demand threatens the treasured landscape of the Sierra Nevada. Can we defend the Sierra from irresponsible development? Can we preserve the Sierra for future generations?

Tom Mooers of Sierra Watch and Shawn Garvey of The Sierra Fund will join us to discuss the campaign to save Tahoe's Martis Valley and the effort to create a Sierra Conservancy.

Tom Mooers is the Executive Director of Sierra Watch and for more than ten years has been building a strong track record in protecting the natural resources of California. Shawn Garvey is the Chief Executive Officer of The Sierra Fund, where he works to direct public and private philanthropic investment towards conservation in the Sierra Nevada.

6:30 Pot Luck and 7:30 Program

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Friday October 15 · General Meeting · Seaman's Lodge, Pioneer Park, Nevada City

Hetch Hetchy, Yosemite's Lost Valley

John Muir called Yosemite National Park's Hetch Hetchy Valley "a grand landscape garden, one of Nature's rarest and most precious mountain temples." Despite the best efforts of John Muir and the Sierra Club, Congress in 1913 allowed the City of San Francisco to build a dam and reservoir there.

Ron Good will present a program of slides and an award-winning film about the movement to restore Hetch Hetchy Valley with a "win" for Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy and a "win" for the San Francisco Bay Area water and power users and the Turlock and Modesto irrigation districts.

Ron Good is the Executive Director of Restore Hetch Hetchy, a non-profit organization that "spun-off" from the Sierra Club's Hetch Hetchy Restoration Task Force.



Annual Sierra Nevada Group Awards Night. 7:00 Dessert Pot Luck and 7:30 Program

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Sierra Uplift

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

A call to action!

Before I launch into anything more controversial, I want to express my thanks and gratitude to the folks who spend at least one day every other month inserting, folding, labeling and fastening our *Uplift*, getting it ready for mailing to you. Rachel Hillemann, our Circulation guru, has recruited Nancy and Ames Gilbert, Penny Peiser, Joan Armer, Megan Black, Hannah Neilsen, Karl Hillemann, and Karen and Harry Wyeth to help with these tasks. More volunteers are always welcome – Rachel can be reached at 274-9477.



I surprised myself this summer by watching a large portion of the Democratic National Convention. I felt I needed to hear what the Democrats were saying in what is deemed to be the most important election in recent history. Unfortunately for those without cable or satellite TV, the local networks broadcast only hour-long segments each night. Well, I was impressed with a good deal of what I heard. And if the rhetoric is turned into action, then the election could indeed be historic and positive. I thought you might be interested in reading what an active participant in the Convention had to say.

Excerpts from notes by Larry Fahn, Sierra Club President

The Democratic National Convention

As you probably know, the environmental message reverberated well with delegates and the multitude of press all week. I can attest that one of the very biggest responses from the convention floor to John Kerry's dynamic acceptance speech last was his stated determination to create an energy policy that will free America from its destructive dependence on Saudi oil. Another big rousing standing ovation came when Senator Kerry told us that John Edwards would be a great Vice-President, and NOT a vice-president that would meet in secret with polluters. The Sierra Club's ongoing lawsuit, which was argued this spring at the U.S. Supreme Court, against Cheney and his secretive Energy Task Force, no doubt helped keep this issue on Kerry's radar screen.

I was thrilled and a bit surprised to see that the Platform of the Democratic Party, criticized by many environmentalists as "vague", includes strong language that trade agreements must protect internationally recog-

nized workers' rights and environmental standards as vigorously as they now protect commercial concerns.

At the big Environment Votes '04 rally Robert F. Kennedy Jr., gave one of the most impassioned and eloquent speeches of the entire week. Kennedy's indictment of an administration where the environmental and public resource law is being drafted and enforced, or ignored for the whim of corporate polluters, and his plea to do everything possible to retire them, brought the overflowing crowd to its feet in an ecstatic rousing cheer.

Kerry was terrific, and his multiple mentions of environmental issues gave us a lot of hope that the environment will emerge as a high-profile issue in the coming months.

We are hopeful that Club activists will do as much as possible to help with phone banking, and other types of voter contact in battleground states.

**Contact us at
road.somewhere@sierraclub.org.**

Bruce Lund, Grass Valley resident and Sierra Club member

A Resident's Concerns about Grass Valley

I am working to generate support for the following declaration:

"We, the people of Nevada County, wish to keep our towns rural, and avoid the housing tract/subdivision type of growth taking place in neighboring counties, such as Placer County. We feel strongly that rural life is a more healthy way to live and raise our children."

Several large subdivisions are planned for Nevada County. If you wish to help pass a Declaration of Rural Living in Nevada County, please contact **Citizens for Rural Living** at #32, 101 W. McKnight Way, Suite B, Grass Valley, CA 95949-9613.

Roadless Rule Threatened

The Bush Administration has decided to create its own "roadless" rule to replace the "roadless" rule implemented by the Clinton administration. The current rule protects the last untouched wilderness in the National Forest system - roughly 60 million of the 190 million acres of national forest - from mining, drilling, and development. It preserves fish and wildlife habitat and vital watersheds for drinking water. The current rule was developed via a process that lasted more than a year, included 600 public meetings, and drew 2.2 million public comments, more than 90 percent of which were favorable.

The Bush Administration's new scheme would force governors to petition the federal government to protect the last remaining pristine forests in their states - national forests that belong to all the people of America.

This is exactly why people are working to permanently protect our last wild areas. The California Wild Heritage Act would protect forever as wilderness over two million acres of roadless lands in California. No area protected by Congress as wilderness has ever been removed from wilderness designation.

Please oppose the Bush rule and support wilderness designation for Grouse Lakes and Castle Peak in Nevada County. **Comment period on the Bush proposed rule ends September 14, 2004.** For a sample letter to print and mail, got to our website: www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/sierranevada.

Great Yuba Clean-up is Here! September 18

It's that time again! Over the past several years, we have been asked to field a team for the **Great Yuba Clean-Up** organized by SYRCL. The date is Saturday, Sept. 18 from 9 a.m. to noon. SYRCL has given us our traditional spot at Lang's Crossing on the South Yuba River. Lang's Crossing is the bridge on Bowman Road about 1 mile from Highway 20, just past the PG&E Sierra Discovery trail and display.

We invite you to help collect items of trash that have accumulated over the year. Each year there seems to be less and less - a very good sign. But that doesn't mean we don't need you! Please join us by calling Karen Cox, 265-3265 or email: twokyuba@telis.org and let her know you're coming.

Don't forget that in this case - **there is a free lunch** and raffle - courtesy of SYRCL at Memorial Park in Grass Valley. It's a great community effort.



Sept. 17 General Meeting

(continued from page 1)

The irreplaceable landscape of Martis Valley and the quality of life of the Tahoe-Truckee region are under threat of sprawling urban and resort development.

The proposed Martis Valley Community Plan calls for:

- Urban development of over 6,000 new housing units – enough development for a total urban population of around 20,000.
- New roads and pavement, including widening Highway 267 to four lanes.
- Destruction of Martis Valley natural resources for resort development, including at least three new golf courses and expanded ski facilities.

Sierra Watch is spearheading a concerted campaign to ensure a better future for Martis Valley which does not require a four-lane Highway 267 and seeks to put much of the north and east side of Highway 267 in the Martis Valley into permanent land conservancy.

To learn more come to the meeting!

Oct. 15 General Meeting

(continued from page 1)

Along with slides showing Hetch Hetchy in the early 1900s and modern-day scenes of the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne River, Ron will show their new documentary film, "Hetch Hetchy: Yosemite's Lost Valley," which received the Best of Entries award at the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival in Nevada City this past January.

The program will also describe the natural and human history of Hetch Hetchy Valley by exploring the effect of rivers and glaciers on the natural landscape, the historical presence of Native Americans, the arrival of European-Americans, and the philosophical debate with John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, and President Theodore Roosevelt regarding the proposal to build a dam and reservoir in Hetch Hetchy Valley. The program contains dramatically beautiful pictures of the area.

At this General Meeting our Annual Sierra Nevada Group Awards Ceremony will recognize outstanding individuals and organizations.

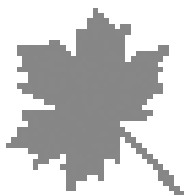
13th Annual Run through the Colors, Sunday Oct. 24

Sign up! Clip the form on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter and mail. You can also download the entry form from our web site:
www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/sierranevada

There are lots of ways to help! Call Theresa or Richard at 265-2666 or email them:
randtthomas@sbcglobal.net



Where: Pioneer Park, Nevada City
When: 7:30 a.m. Registration begins. 8:30 a.m. Races begin.
Races: 5K and 10K footraces, and a 5K Walk. Get a great T-shirt and help support the local Sierra Club!
Courses: Fairly hilly loops on mostly paved roads through the fall colors of Nevada City.



SNG Annual Picnic

Bob and Joyce Goar hosted another successful and enjoyable Sierra Nevada Group annual picnic at their home on July 16. Thank you Bob and Joyce!



Karen Cox

Conservation Report

Cottonwood

For those of you willing to write a letter it is time to address the Cottonwood Project. Regular readers of this column will remember that way back in 1998, the Tahoe National Forest proposed using herbicides to control the brush that was competing with the conifer seedlings in the area burned by the Cottonwood fire (east of Sierraville). Local environmentalists, led by the Forest Issues Group, have been opposing this project since it was first suggested. In 2001, a lawsuit was decided in our favor, with the judge requiring the Forest Service to address a number of issues. Now the Tahoe National Forest is back with a draft EIS and we have until September 20 to comment. The TNF is proposing to spray 13,500 acres of native vegetation growing among the conifer trees planted or reseeded naturally after the 1994 Cottonwood fire. Our concerns remain the same: herbicides are not needed, the conifers are growing and the use of herbicides is highly detrimental to native plants, wildlife and humans. For more information and a sample letter see www.forestissuesgroup.com.

Yaak Valley, Montana

I recently traveled up to the far northwest corner of Montana to join the Great Old Broads for Wilderness (www.greatoldbroads.org) who had gathered in the Yaak Valley to help the local environmentalists advocate for wilderness. The Yaak still contains remnants of a vast inland rain forest. It was fascinating to learn about a different ecosystem. We took hikes led by local experts in hydrology and lichens. The money tree in that part of Montana is the Western Larch a strange looking conifer that sheds its needles in the winter. It is among the strongest and hardest of the softwood species, and very fire resistant after it reaches maturity. We took a core of a tree with a diameter of about 2 feet and it proved to be at least 300 years old.

One day we hiked up Mt. Henry and looked down on a pattern of

clear cuts from the past 5 decades. Another day we worked on pulling noxious weeds near Hoskins Lake. The local environmental group, The Yaak Valley Forest Council, is trying to protect 14 roadless areas still remaining in the Yaak Valley. The presence of grizzly bears is one of the major reasons for the continued existence of the roadless



Pulling noxious weeds



On top of Mt. Henry with clear cuts in the background

areas. The Forest Service is required to limit roads above 4500-foot elevation in order to protect grizzly bear habitat. The local Kootenai National Forest is working on its revision of Forest Plan and we were there to help the local environmentalists make a case for wilderness and bring some publicity to this wild and remote area. At the end of our time there we did meet with the Kootenai District Ranger and some of his staff. We also made the front page of the Sunday Missoulian, the major state newspaper for Montana. An added bonus was the opportunity to meet and hang out with the locals, including nature writer, Rick Bass.

Yuba River Cleanup

Join me for the annual Yuba River Cleanup Day, September 18. We will be working at our usual spot, Lang's Crossing. Come out for an enjoyable morning and a feeling of accomplishment. You need to let SYRCL know if you're coming so check out the announcement on page 3.

Sierra Uplift

THE SIERRA NEVADA GROUP of
the SIERRA CLUB
PO BOX 1042
NEVADA CITY, CA 95959

NonProfit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 8
Grass Valley, CA

Future Meetings

November 19, 2004

Seaman's Lodge
7:00 Dessert Pot Luck
7:30 Program
The Loma Rica Project
Phil Carville

January 21, 2005

February 18, 2005

programs not yet determined

March 18, 2005

Meeting will be in Marysville
Gems of Alaska
Chet Dunbar

April 15, 2005

May 20, 2005

programs not yet determined

July 15, 2005

Annual Sierra Nevada Group Picnic

Monthly Committee Meetings

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

Local Hiking Groups

- A group meets Wed and Sat mornings at 8:30 am (note the earlier, summer time) 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 Helen Kelly at 273-7309 for more information.
- Another group whose hikes are longer and more strenuous (6 to 12 miles) meets on Tues and Fri at 8:45am on Sutton Way just up from the Coldwell Banker office. They also decide that morning where they are going to hike, Contact Vicky Anthony at 274-3863 for more information.
- And there is the Nevada County Hiking Club.
See <www.ncws.com/akh/hike/>