



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Blue Oak Group



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

Blue Oak Group Forestry News

By Trish Puterbaugh, Lassen Forest Preservation Group - Forestry Committee of the Blue Oak Group Sierra Club



After over 30 years of forest activism, living in and loving the forests of California and our West, I am one of thousands of fire survivors. As I have written many times, climate change, coupled with over 100 years of fire suppression, grazing and logging have altered our forest ecosystems. Large, weather driven wildfires are now forever changing these ecosystems further. Mother Nature is in charge. I only wish we humans could heed her warnings.

The Park Fire, the latest Butte County wildfire, burned 430,933 acres. Much of it was low and moderate severity. However, the communities of Cohasset, Mill Creek and Forest Ranch were heavily affected. There are now loan programs for those whose homes burned to allow them to

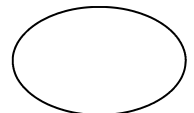
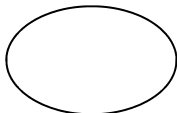
(continued on page 2)

ADDRESS LABEL

Or Current Resident

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit 590
Chico, California

Sierra Club (Blue Oak Group) - Motherlode Chapter
Post Office Box 2012
Chico CA 95927



Forestry News *(continued from p. 1)*

move out of the “wild land urban interface” (WUI). This is certainly a solution and one gaining traction - stop building in fire prone areas. But.....those who live in Chico, close to the park, are also very susceptible. Millions of California homes are within the WUI.

Instead of pouring billions into fire suppression, many are calling for a shift. Pour millions into home hardening, sprinkler systems and defensible space. Mandate prescribed fire and fire prevention immediately surrounding communities. Fund the California Fair Plan. Wildfire is an integral part of the California ecosystem, and we humans cannot stop it. We must live with fire. Most of these wildfires are wind and weather driven - something we have little control over at this time.

The Park fire burned 95% of the Ishi Wilderness. 47% was moderate or high severity. Prescribed burns have been planned for almost a decade in Ishi - but they never happened. Prescribed fire has to become the priority. The Ponderosa Way bridges over Deer and Mill Creeks burned. There is funding for emergency treatment for roads and culverts in this area and work is being done before the rains come. Work in Big Chico Creek has also been prioritized for treatment with sediment catchments and other erosion control features being installed. The Central Valley Federally listed Chinook salmon is in long-term decline in California. Without immediate and ongoing work these once abundant fish will likely die out. This is almost unbelievable for those of us who knew streams full of returning salmon.

Salvage logging is another controversial ongoing debate. What to do with all the dead trees on our foothills and mountains. Let nature take its course - which some say will be higher fire hazard when the trees fall and die? Or cut the trees and replant? Most studies agree that salvage logging is scientifically unsupported ecologically. Logging compounds the disturbance of wildfire causing heavy water and soil damage. However, money is often the bottom line and fire killed trees are more valuable immediately after the fire. Emergency funding is generally available immediately, so counties, PGE and the state often move in quickly. Its painful to watch so many trees cut down and it feels wrong. Cutting hazard trees is important but ecologically it is preferable to wait 2-3 years to start working in post-fire landscapes. Let the land heal, let nature show us the way. There is also heated controversy over which trees may or

(concluded on page 3)

Newsletter Information

Blue Oak Group News is published four times a year, in March, June, September, and December, by the Blue Oak Group of the Sierra Club, P.O. Box 2012, Chico, CA 95927. For changes in mailing address or email address, contact Suzette Welch, booksontape@rocketmail.com.

For submissions, comments, or inquiries, contact: Suzette Welch, booksontape@rocketmail.com 530 570-3240. Please include name, phone number, and address with each submission. Short, single-topic articles are preferred. Deadlines for proposed articles and letters to the editor: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1.

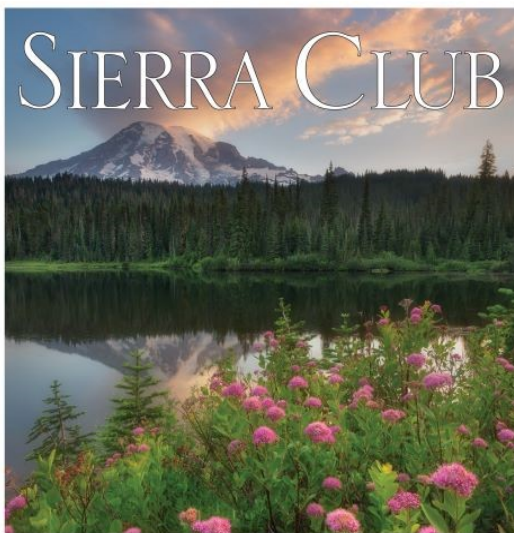
Blue Oak Group News reserves the right to edit all submissions for reasons of space, clarity and potential libel. The opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Sierra Club or the Blue Oak Group.

Forestry News *(continued from p. 2)*

may not die, how to avoid beetle infestations, and on and on!! The California Native Plant Society has an excellent publication written after the Camp Fire, “CNPS Fire Recovery Guide”. The Butte County Resource Conservation District website also has some excellent information.

Emily Dickenson wrote, “Hope perches in the Soul and Sings and Sings”. And hope is all around us. Mother Nature is so resilient. Black Oak sprouting from burned crowns appeared almost immediately after the fire. Coffee berry, scrub oak, redbud and ceanothus are coming up everywhere. Now, even heavily burned dogwood are showing signs of life on stems and crowns. We are looking forward to many mushroom species after these sweet rains at the start of the fall season. Reeds, bunch grasses, mints, willows and other natives are returning in the riparian areas. It will be up to us to tend the lands as they recover. Mother Nature is in charge, but we can be her advocate and work with her to heal.

November 2024



2025 Sierra Club Wall Calendar

The original nature calendar and bestseller for over thirty years -- more than 10 million sold! Filled with thirteen breathtaking landscape photos of the grandeur of the North American wilderness and natural beauty, it will inspire you every day to explore, enjoy, and protect the planet. Each and every spread of this monthly calendar features a unique photo of one of our nation's most spectacular wild places.

This year we've moved our wall calendars away from wire binding to better align with our environmental goals. Our new environmentally conscious binding ensures easier recycling, and the photos and grids are printed on elemental chlorine free, Forest Stewardship Council®-certified paper

containing a minimum of 60 percent pre and postconsumer waste. FSC® certification guarantees that the virgin component of the paper has been sourced from forests managed in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

Dimensions:

Size closed: 11 ¼ inches wide by 11 ¾ inches

Opens to: 11 ¼ inches wide by 22 ½ inches long

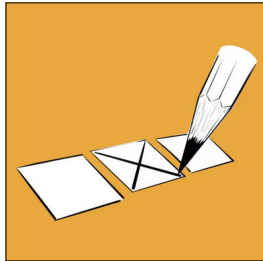
ISBN: 978-1-57805-242-4

To Order: <https://www.sierraclub.org/>

Click on SHOP (upper right)

Blue Oak 2025 ExCom Elections

By Suzette Welch



It is again time for Blue Oak Group Members to vote for people to represent them on the Blue Oak Group Executive Committee (ExCom).

This year we have four empty seats and three candidates: Jane Coleman, Betty Volker, Suzette Welch. You can read the candidates statements on the ballot form included with this newsletter. For those members who do not receive a mailed newsletter but instead get an email notification that the Newsletter is available online, that email will include the link for your downloadable ballot.

Please take a few minutes to participate in this important process. Ballots should be filled out, folded, taped, stamped and mailed by December 31, 2024.

ExCom Candidates' Statements

Jane Coleman

The Sierra Club is probably the biggest and oldest grassroots environmental organization in America. It has been steadfast in pursuing its mission to protect and preserve the environment, while also encouraging and providing programs to explore and enjoy the environment. I would like to remain on the Executive Board of the local Blue Oak group of the Sierra Club in order to help continue this mission locally.

I have been a Sierra Club member for over 40 years and on the local Blue Oak Executive Board for over 6 years. I would appreciate your vote.

Betty Volker

I have been a member of the Blue Oak group for 30+ years. I have served as an outings leader, as singles chair, and on the executive committee a few times. If elected, I will continue to work for the betterment of the Blue Oak Group and Sierra Club.

Suzette Welch

I got involved with Yahi Group by helping with Newsletter mailing preparation and then became a member of the ExCom in order to have more influence and involvement with group activities. Board members encouraged me to become co-chair and then Chair of the ExCom. I have been on the ExCom for 14 years. I am currently Chair of Blue Oak Group ExCom, Coeditor of the Newsletter and administrator of the Blue Oak Group Facebook Page.

I am very interested in improving our natural environment by supporting planting of trees, especially oaks; promoting the use of sustainable agriculture; conserving and protecting water here in the North State; promoting and supporting clean energy; and encouraging people to get out and enjoy, appreciate and support the natural environment.

I am asking for your vote again so that I can continue to be on the Sierra Club Blue Oak Group ExCom.

Blue Oak Winter 2024/2025 Outings and Events

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza. For updated outings information and for general information about outings and meeting places, please see our web site at: www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/blue-oak

Friday, December 13—Blue Oak Holiday Potluck

It is to be held at Valley Oaks Village 1950 Wild Oak Lane, Chico, Ca. Party starts at 5:30 pm. Limited parking so please carpool. Bring your own beer and wine. There will be a \$5 charge for room rental and cleanup.

Sunday, January 19—Day Hike (2,A (Educational) Lower Bidwell Park Loop.

A 5 mile loop hike of paved, lower Bidwell Park. Along the way we will discuss the history of the park and the many changes that have happened over the years. Meet at 9AM at the bridge over One Mile. Rain cancels. Leader: Alan, 530-588-8031 or ajmendoza666@gmail.com

Tuesday, February 18 —Help Prepare Blue Oak Newsletter for Mailing

Join the mail crew on Tuesday Feb. 18, 2025 at 2:00 pm to process the Blue Oak Group Newsletter for mailing. The meeting place is in the Shasta Room of the Lodge at the Terraces in California Park located at 2750 Sierra Sunrise Terrace. The Lodge is the older independent living section of California Park.

Everyone is welcome to come and help. So please join us so we can quickly get the Newsletters ready to mail. The processing gathering provides a great excuse to get together, catch up on news and meet new people. Suzette Welch, Coeditor Blue Oak Group Sierra Club Newsletter

Saturday, February 22—Day Hike (2,B) Hike the South Side of Bidwell Park.

Enjoy the amazing spring beauty of upper Bidwell Park along with beautiful views as we hike the South Rim/Annie Bidwell trail. A 6-7 mile hike paralleling Big Chico Creek with several short 100' up and down climbs. Bring boots, water and lunch. Car shuttle required. Meet at 9AM at Five Mile parking area. Rain cancels. Leader: Alan, 530-588-8031 or ajmendoza666@gmail.com

Holiday Potluck Dec. 13, 2024

By Suzette Welch



FRIDAY DECEMBER 13, 2024, will be the date for our annual Holiday Potluck. Once again it is to be held at Valley Oaks Village 1950 Wild Oak Lane, Chico, Ca. Party starts at 5:30 pm. Limited parking so please carpool. Bring your own beer and wine. There will be a \$5 charge for room rental and cleanup.

Our speaker for the evening will be long time Sierra Club Member and hiker Dave Nopel.

The annual Holiday Party is a good time to visit with old friends and meet some new people. So bring your favorite dish and plan to have a pleasant evening.

Beaver-ing Away in Big Chico Creek Canyon, Post Park Fire

By Wolfy Rougle, Planning and Watershed Program Manager, Butte County Resource Conservation District

The Park Fire was a tragic and devastating event many of us will be processing for years. Dear friends, lost homes and communities will never be the same. Today I'll report on just one narrow aspect of this fire: the post-fire watershed restoration in Big Chico Creek Canyon (Otakim Sewi).

When a crisis hits, decades of neighboring really pay off. The folks who manage all the lands in the canyon were already calling each other while the fire was still burning. This included the City of Chico parks manager, Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve (BCCER), the private lands managed collectively as the Higgins Ridge neighborhood, and Sierra Pacific Industries lands, as well as the Mechoopda Indian Tribe, the Butte County RCD (where I work), and the Fire Safe Council. Collectively, we decided erosion control was our top priority.

We knew that after a fire like Park, a 1- or 2-year rainstorm can produce a 25- or 50-year flood. That's because raindrops hit bare loose soil with much more force than when they fall on dead leaves and roots and grass (all of which are called effective ground cover and all of which just burned up). In fact, in August, when the upper watershed got a modest rain (maybe an inch and a half, in a limited area), Big Chico Creek was brown for a week. The water was so opaque, it maxed out our turbidimeters. NO_DATA

To see why this happens, just shape some flour into little mountains in a dish. Sprinkle water over your mountains. Next, scatter granola, coconut shavings, etc over the slopes and now sprinkle water over that. Enjoy this great rainy-day activity to instill extra climate anxiety in your kids.

Imagine being a fish trying to breathe in that wet runny flour. Even though Big Chico Creek's salmon have evolved with fire and pulses of sediment, it's safe to say 2024's tiny salmon run could be gravely harmed by a super-pulse of sediment.

Therefore, guided by experts who converged from across Northern California, the Big Chico Creek team developed a three-pronged strategy to keep sediment out of Big Chico Creek if we Can:

1. Increase effective ground cover to above 45% wherever possible – whether by contour-felling dead trees, broadcasting chips and slash, scattering weed-seed-free mulch, or simply noting needle-fall will suffice and moving on. Post-fire studies suggest when ground cover is above 45%, erosion is reduced by over 75%.
2. Stormproof the canyon's roads by replacing burned culverts, installing and armoring critical dips, and cleaning out ditches. A blown-out road is the last thing we, or the fish, need.
3. Slow and spread the runoff that reaches the creek's tributaries. To do so, we adapted the "beaver-dam analogue" concept popular in meadows. Experts helped us design rock-log hybrid weirs, like mini-beaver-dams (but with no live green material in them, because we don't have any). Built rock by rock by hand in ephemeral tributaries, these structures are examples of "process-based restoration" – PBRs -- so called because they harness the natural process of runoff itself to reverse downcutting, retain sediment, and recharge aquifers.

(continued on page 7)

Beavering Away *(continued from page 6)*

For efficiency and speed, the Resource Conservation District served as coordinator and environmental permitting manager for the whole canyon. (Yes, even emergency restoration actions still require permits – LOTS of them!) We invited in every wildlife and water-related agency imaginable, so they could see the importance of this work. Thanks to them and the incredible land stewards, crews were building in-stream structures 67 days after the fire – which is, believe it or not, fast. Choreographing this project has involved over 20 agencies, land managers, Tribes, and work crews.

We'll build thousands of structures and contour-fell thousands of trees. And you know what? The creek will still be brown this winter. You can count on that.

But the work we accomplished this fall will keep the Canyon's creeks and aquifers functioning better for years.

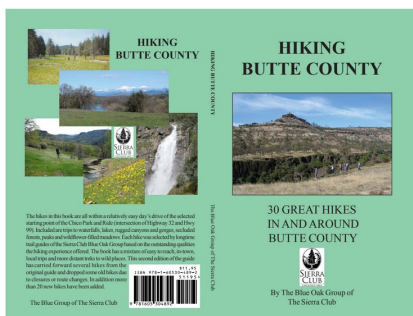
If you want to reduce erosion potential on your burned land:

- Your #1 bet is to increase ground cover. Logs, branches, wood chips, rice straw, leaves and pine needles all count. You don't have to cover up every inch: once you can only see 50% of the soil, move on.
- Contour-felling dead trees is also great. Lock them in place with stumps. This takes considerable skill, strength and money. But on wild slopes, it provides better habitat and longer-lasting effects than straw wattles.
- We don't recommend rolling logs and rocks into creeks without training. It's illegal without a permit (yes, really!) and you could make flooding worse.
- Wattles are still great for around your roads and home – buy the kind without plastic netting.

This work is made possible by financial support from Sierra Nevada Brewery, CSU-Chico, Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency, and many generous small donors to BCCER.

Hiking Butte County

By Alan Mendoza



The updated new third edition of the Blue Oak Group Sierra Club's **Hiking Butte County** book is now available. The book has several updated hikes and adds more hiking suggestions.

The cost is \$14.95, and it is available at **Mountain Sports** and **The Bookstore** in Chico. For more information, contact Alan Mendoza at 530-891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

What Are Those Sierra Club Abbreviations?

A brief discussion of the major S.C. organizations that affect our policies and actions

By Grace M. Marvin, Blue Oak Group Conservation Chair;

Delegate to the SCC and the CCC, and Group Representative to the MLC (Mother Lode Chapter-- in Sacramento).

While the center of the nationwide Sierra Club is in Oakland, Ca., it has a legislative office in Washington, D.C., -where major efforts are made to get Senators, and members of Congress and the Executive Branch to support the Club's policies. However, the statewide organization, Sierra Club-CA (SCC) - with thirteen chapters, is based in Sacramento. And our Blue Oak Group is only one of eleven Groups that are under the Mother Lode chapter (MLC) – based in Sacramento.

What is the SC-CA (Sierra Club California)? Consider its Mission Statement:

The mission of Sierra Club California (SC-CA) is to promote the preservation, restoration, and enjoyment of California's environment, and enable chapters and grassroots activists to speak as one voice to promote California conservation. ...Sierra Club California (SC-CA) has a staff of advocates and organizers *who defend and advance environmental policies that fight pollution, protect air and water quality, advance clean energy, support parks, and preserve natural resources, wildlife and wildlife habitat. The staff also works to keep members around the state informed about legislative and regulatory activities affecting the environment.*

What is the CCC (California Conservation Committee)?

Who decides on the policies behind the Club's advocacy efforts (such as those by the SC-CA and volunteers)? Policies underlie our S.C. activism locally, statewide, across the country and planet. Many policies come from the national office. The strictly California based conservation goals and policies are decided by Delegates elected to serve on the CCC. These members work in forming and voting on state based conservation goals, including those from the 13 California chapters and on conservation-based lawsuits.

These Delegates (including yours truly) also, attend candidate interviews and vote on other volunteer applicants who want to guide, overlook, and work with SC-CA staff. Note: The imminent SC-CA chair (a highly active S.C. volunteer for many years!) is eager to encourage each of the state chapters to commit to one or two conservation goals, to work on lobbying legislators, and to increase collaboration between the SC-CA and regular members, i.e., volunteers!

ACTIONS of the SC-CA

Bobbi Jo Chavarria , who had previously been focusing on political and a variety of other conservation issues recently became Acting Director of Sierra Club-California (SC-CA).

She explained how her staff works very hard on a large variety of projects, many of which are listed below. She pointed out that policies of the Club's California Conservation Committee (CCC) have national dimensions and can receive national Sierra Club financial support.

The national club has undergone recent restructuring, thereby helping SC-CA's organizing and financing efforts. Moreover, the national Sierra Club includes 40 national field staff who work across the country and has divided our country's 50 states into 5 regions with California being the only state that stands alone., i.e., it is a 5th region all by itself.

(continued on page 9)

Sierra Club Abbreviations *(continued from page 8)*

As Acting Director, Bobbi Jo Chavarria recently presented an overview of SC-CA’s many activities, its priorities , and its relationship to both national and local efforts. For example, one of the key partnerships she identified is GREEN California.

The following are key campaigns of SC-CA:

- Electrification and fossil free energy, e.g., Beyond Coal and Distributive Energy
- Legislative committee work with numerous agencies, including CAL EPA and Departments such Water Resources, Fish and Game, BLM.
- Regulatory agencies
- Federal and state lobbying (and legislative score card)
- Political and civic engagement
- Water, e.g. Delta Tunnels, Sites, S.F. Bay, safe drinking water, sea level rise. (California has the majority of tidal marshes in the nation.)
- Tribal relationships
- Transportation – including energy issues
- Wild fires
- Climate Action Committee. (There is a coalition working on Clean air Solutions.)
- Energy, e.g., oil, coal, offshore wind, etc. Related: a Clean Ports project and a key partner in GREEN CALIFORNIA.
- National monuments
- Outdoor activities.

We can be very proud that all these issues are addressed by the Club’s staff and volunteers. Thank YOU for your work and support in helping to meet the Club’s goals.

2024 Blue Oak Group Sierra Club

Executive Committee

Chair: Suzette Welch
 Interim Secretary: Betty Volker
 Treasurer: John Hollister
 Board Member: Jane Coleman
 Board Member: Marissa Maxey
 Board Member: Grace Marvin

Committee Chairs & Contacts

Rep. To Motherlode: Grace Marvin	Newsletter Advertising: Position Open
Conservation Chair: Grace Marvin	Outings Chair: Alan Mendoza
Facebook Administrator: Suzette Welch	Outreach Chair: Position Open
Forest activist: Patricia Puterbaugh	Political Chair: Position Open
Membership Chair: Position Open	Program Chair: Position Open
Newsletter Editors: Suzette Welch, Louise Casey	Publicity : Position Open
Newsletter Distribution: Steve Miller, Dave Nopel, and Suzette Welch	Treasurer: John Hollister
	Website: Louise Casey
	Youth Activities: Position Open

Newsletter Sponsors

Heartfelt thanks to these sponsors who make this newsletter possible.

FLORAL NATIVE NURSERY

14388 Meridian Road
Chico, CA 95973
Telephone/Fax: (530) 892-2511
E-mail: canative@shocking.com



*Helping Buyers and Sellers of
Real Estate Achieve Their Goals
Through Kind, Quality Service.*



**Area
Specialist**

Patrick Riley

530.588.6593

CENTURY 21 1101 El Monte
Select Real Estate, Inc. Ave, Chico

*Serving Butte Meadows, Forest
Ranch, Chico, Paradise & Beyond.*
CA DRE 01417492



Organic & Vegan Skin & Hair Care Products

Lotions, Creams, Body Butters, Soaps & Shampoo,
Serums & Toners, Scrubs, & Body Oils

1600 Mangrove Ave. Suite 140, Chico CA 95926

Mountain Sports

Specialists In

- * Technical Outerwear & Sportswear
- * Backpacking Equipment
- * Rock & Mountaineering Equipment
- * Travel Gear & Luggage
- * X-Country Skis & Snowshoes



"Serving Chico Since 1975"

176 E. 3rd Street, Chico, CA 95928 (530) 345-5011

Ed's Printing

- We encourage the use of recycled papers
100% recycled papers available
- We use vegetable based inks
- Black & white and color copies

550 Cherry Street • Chico, CA • (530) 891-4625



**SIERRA
CLUB**
FOUNDED 1892

Become a Sierra Club Member

<http://www.sierraclub.org/california/membership>



SOLAR
WIND

HYDRO
WOOD

ENERGY

POWER & HEATING SYSTEMS

GARY COLE

800.492.4061 • Cell: 530.736.2612

www.wingsolar.net • garycole@wingsolar.net

John D. Burge, CPA
Certified Public Accountant

530 342-3680
17 Williamsburg Lane
Chico, CA 95926

Fax 530 342-3721
johnburge1@gmail.com
www.johnburgecpa.com

Sponsorship pricing: Business card size rate is \$100 per year. Quarter page \$225 per year.