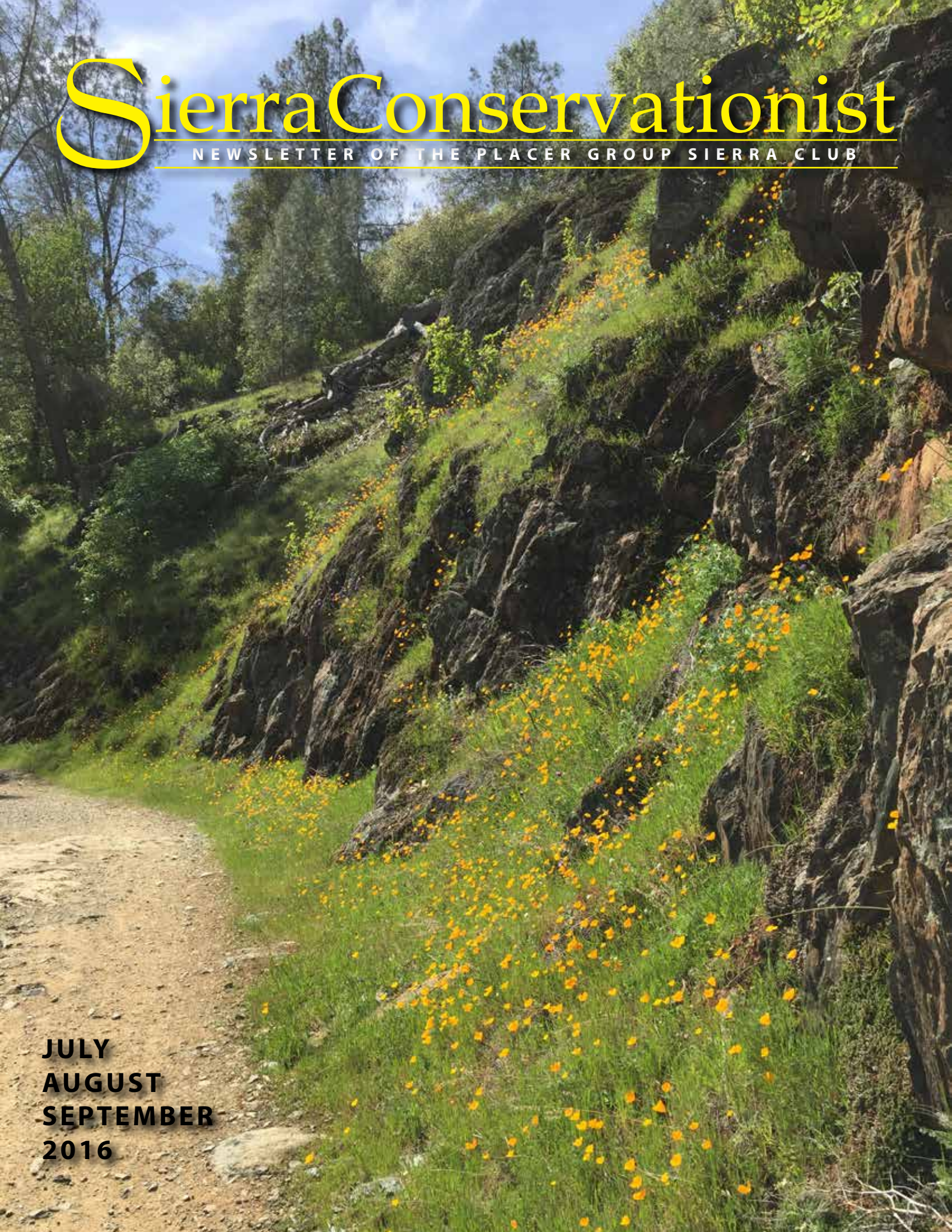


Sierra Conservationist

NEWSLETTER OF THE PLACER GROUP SIERRA CLUB

**JULY
AUGUST
SEPTEMBER
2016**





YOUR Placer Group of the Sierra Club Needs YOU... NOW!

Three seats are up for grabs to serve on the elected, six-member Placer Group Executive Committee (ExCom) that votes on positions, projects, and programs. If you are interested in air, water, land-use, wildlife issues, and more in Placer County, this is your opportunity to raise your hand. Expertise is helpful, of course, but it's not a requirement. A passion and desire to protect our environment is a good start.

For the Placer Group to have a role in future environmental protection in the county, we need members to step up—now! Ex Com election ballots will be prepared in late September. Won't you consider being a nominee and serving?

ExCom terms are for two years, and in general, meetings for members only are monthly (first Wednesday of the month), except for January or July). If an urgent ExCom vote is needed on an issue, tele conference calls or email votes are also options. To see how the meetings are conducted, please attend the next ExCom meeting on August 3 and/or September 7 and consider being a nominee for Placer Group.

Your Placer Group works only if its members step up to help. For more information, please contact any one the current ExCom. Names and contact info can be found in this newsletter; we'd love to talk to you!



No Fireworks

As we gear up to celebrate our nation's independence this July 4th, we would like to remind citizens of the law regarding the use of fireworks.

No person shall use, discharge or possess any fireworks, as defined in Sections 12505 or 12529 of the State Health and Safety Code, within the unincorporated territory of Placer County.

Violation of this section shall be a misdemeanor, punishable by either a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) per occurrence, or imprisonment in the county jail for a term no exceeding six months. Sub-divisions included in Placer County are Morgan Creek, Morgan Greens, Doyle Ranch, Sun Valley, Willow Creek and Sabre City.



Placer Group Sierra Club
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<http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/placer>

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Public Relations/Newsletter: We invite your letters, comments and input. Our deadline is 15 days prior to publication, the first day of each quarter during the year. Our newsletter can also be accessed on our website.

The Sierra Conservationist is published quarterly: January, April, July online and printed in October by Placer Group Sierra Club, a nonprofit organization.

ON THE COVER: Wildflowers along the Stagecoach Trail in the American River Canyon (Photo: Cat Raymond)



Squaw Valley Proposes a Gondola By Arlene Jamar

A proposed base to base gondola to connect Squaw Valley ski area with Alpine Meadows ski area is a part of KSL Capital Partner's expansion plan for these two areas.

KSL purchased and combined the two ski areas in 2010. Now lead by CEO Andy Wirth, KSL hopes to hugely expand its facilities at Squaw Valley. There is considerable ongoing opposition to the proposed expansion of the existing Village at Squaw Valley.

The gondola is a more recent addition to the expansion plan. The gondola would operate from the base of the KT-22 ski lift in Squaw Valley, go up and across the ridge, encroach on the Granite Chief Wilderness and then go down to the base lodge at Alpine Meadows. The gondola would have two station stops along the way where skiers could disembark and ski. If the gondola project was approved, two additional ski lifts on adjacent private property could then be built.

Andy Wirth wants Squaw Valley to become an international destination. He says that the community will benefit from increased tourism. Strong opposition to the expansion plans comes from Valley residents, environmentalists and those dedicated to limiting any development in the Lake Tahoe basin because it has a direct effect on Lake. The negative effects of increased traffic, pollution, and disturbance of the Valley are issues included in the opposition.

An estimated cost of \$35 million for the gondola would replace about 100 car trips per day of the existing shuttle bus system. So, for practical reasons, the gondola is not needed to move skiers from one area to the other area. The existing shuttle system between the two works well. Considering pollution, the shuttle vehicles could easily be changed to electric ones.

Construction of the gondola would be very destructive for this fragile area. Included in the area are hiking opportunities in the Granite Chief Wilderness that also includes the Five Lakes Basin and the Pacific Crest Trail. The gondola's appearance could not be missed and the peaceful setting destroyed by overhead mechanics which would probably operate also during summer months.

The U.S. Forest Service and Placer County both have jurisdiction of this area and each is involved with the project in different ways. Each has a different role in the environmental review process. Placer County's draft EIR is expected to be ready midwinter of 2017. The National Forest draft EIS should be ready in spring of 2017.

Stay up to date on the development of this project and the local folks at: "Keep Squaw True", the publication by Sierra County Prospect and information at the Placer County website.

The expansion plan is a valid concern for skiers. There would be a huge increase in the numbers of skiers and boarders on the slopes. Slope traffic would become dangerous and ski lift wait times would be frustrating. Those skiers that relish new powder snow and currently hike to those upper areas to enjoy making first tracks would have their joy limited by traffic from the gondola way stations.



Voters to Decide County Transportation Tax By Michael Garabedian

County funding for new local freeway projects will be decided by voters in November after the state and feds have refused to pay for new capacity. More highway needs will mean more nonexistent upkeep money with the public paying first and developer fees to pay some costs later on.

Each Placer County local government has agreed on a transportation expenditure plan that is proposed to be funded by a 30-year half cent increase in the county sales tax. This can only happen if the public votes for it in November. On July 12, the Placer County Board of Supervisors is expected to act to send the measure to the ballot.

The expenditure plan has some necessary steps forward for rail to Roseville, transit, bikes, walkability and pedestrian safety. Badly needed local road maintenance funds also has key value to bikers and pedestrians. However, the lion's share of funding is for new highway capacity to be funded upfront with public financing.



Studies document that promises of reduced congestion don't pan out; instead more traffic, more congestion and higher GHG emissions are the result of adding capacity. More lanes actually induce more traffic.

Expenditure plan outline. HIGHWAY PROJECTS – 44.75%, \$716 million for: I-80/Highway 65 interchange, Highway 65 widening, I-80 to Lincoln Boulevard, 15-mile Placer Parkway, Baseline Road widening, Highway 49 operations & safety Improvements, I-80 auxiliary lanes and interchange programs (I-80/SR 174; I-80/Rocklin Road; I-80 Horseshoe Bar; SR 65/ Nelson Lane). TRANSIT EXPANSION – 11.875%, \$190 million for: commuter bus enhancements, Dial A Ride/senior transit expansion, and Capitol Corridor expansion and commuter bus service. LOCAL STREET MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS – 30% (\$480 million) which includes Rural Road Maintenance and Repair Fund. TAHOE PROJECTS – 3% (\$48 million). BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS – 4.75% (\$76 million). COMPETITIVE FUNDING FOR FUTURE NEEDS – 4.375% (\$74 million). TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND ADMINISTRATION – 1% (\$16 million).

Sierra Club will determine its position on the proposal once it is certified for the ballot.

State Evidence Suggests New Wolf May Be in California's Lassen County

SAN FRANCISCO— New evidence released by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife suggests there may be a wolf in Lassen County. The information — not yet conclusive — includes photos from four trail cameras between August and May and a hair sample from one of the sites. While DNA test results were inconclusive as to whether the animal is a wolf, dog or wolf-dog hybrid, the fact the animal persisted through the winter in this remote location leads agency officials to believe the animal is likely a wolf. The animal is not wearing a radio-collar, so its movements will be detectable only by trail camera, tracks, scat and sightings.

For more information visit <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/environment/article85555352.html> or http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press_releases/2016/wolf-06-22-2016.html



SOLAR benefits your energy bill and Placer Group's bottom line.



Once again, the Sierra Club has made arrangements with Sungevity that will hopefully create a win-win for both the solar company and the Placer Group.

For a free solar quote, which will also help us with our conservation costs, please go to <http://content.sierraclub.org/solar/sungevity?ref=138>

All quotes and/or further installations from within Placer Group's boundaries will benefit the Placer Group (and the Mother Lode Chapter).

Getting started with solar is quick and easy. It takes less than three minutes. Request an iQuote from Sungevity to get started today at www.sierraclub.org/solarhomes or call (855) 438-7860 for more information.

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INFORMATION and WEBSITES of Interest

Enjoy an interview by Terry Gross, NPR's "Fresh Air" and article with author Johathan Balcome, whose new book is *What A Fish Knows: The Inner Lives Of Our Underwater Cousins*. Go to <http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2016/06/20/482468094/fish-have-feelings-too-the-inner-lives-of-our-underwater-cousins>

GPS Hound Collars Approved to Hunt Deer—Lawsuit Filed

Should GPS collars be allowed on hounds for deer- and pig-hound hunting and for training purposes? Most Californians (99%) do not hunt but many tolerate hunting as long as fair chase ethics are upheld. However, most citizens do not know that hounds may be used to hunt deer. The Sierra Club's policy on hunting is: "Acceptable management approaches include both regulated period hunting and fishing when based on sufficient scientifically valid biological data and when consistent with all other management purposes and when necessary [for] total protection of particular species or populations."^{*}

Currently in CA, hounders (aka "handlers" or "houndsmen") are allowed to outfit their dogs with radio telemetry collars. In 2015, a proposed amendment to the Mammal Hunting Regulations included an amendment to Section 265, to allow GPS collars on hounds for deer and pig hunting and for training purposes. After months of an unsuccessful effort to stop the amendment, it was approved by the CA Fish and Game Commission (FGC) on April 24. As a result, Public Interest Coalition, an entity that often works with the Sierra Club's Placer Group, filed a lawsuit to challenge the amendment approval.

Hound hunting of deer, with deer being run to fear-flight exhaustion, is banned in the U.S. mainland, except for nine southern states and California. "Fair chase" issues are already compromised with high tech scopes, laser sights, scent attractants, and trail cameras, to mention just a few. Allowing GPS collars on hounds to hunt deer will further erode any semblance of fair chase and greatly increase poaching opportunities.

Hounders based the need on "animal welfare" issues: faster intervention if/when their dogs are injured in an altercation, lost, trespassing, headed for dangerous road crossings, etc., or to stop the hounds from chasing an illegal animal (listed species, for example). However, since hounds can and do range miles from houndsmen, any "intervention," especially in rugged terrain often cannot be either timely or effective. Lost hound risks can be reduced by requiring micro-chips, releasing only trained hounds, and/or having houndsmen keep up with their dogs or keep them leashed. Responsible hounding and animal welfare include not putting dogs at risk for injury or loss in the first place.

With a good lead attorney and co-counsel from both Friends of Animals and Animal Legal Defense Fund, this issue will play out in the courts. For more information, visit: <http://aldf.org/blog/the-animal-legal-defense-fund-files-lawsuit-to-advocate-for-wildlife-welfare>. Marilyn Jasper, Placer Group's Secretary and Co-Conservation Chair, also chairs Public Interest Coalition, the plaintiff in this lawsuit.

^{*}www.sierraclub.org/policy/wildlife/wildlife-and-native-plants

Sheila's Hikes



July 6, Wednesday

Hike (1A) **Summit Lake** (Senior Section)
 We will hike to Summit Lake from Boreal exit off I-80. Our approx 5.5 mile outing with an elevation gain/loss of approx 300 ft. offers a hike through a variety of forest, meadows, and open granite areas with a mix of short ups & downs, a few level spots and a creek crossing. This scenic area, just north of I-80 often abounds in wildflowers. Plan on a long lunch break at the lake. Bring lunch, water and rain gear in case of showers. No dogs. Meet at 9:00 am at Burger King on Lincoln Way in Auburn at Foresthill Exit off I-80 in Auburn or at trailhead at 9:45 am. Leader: Sheila Toner, 530- 886-0673; Leader Trainee Barry Anderson. barry.botany@usamedia.tv.

July 27, Wednesday

Hike (1A), **Flora Lake** (senior section)
 This short, easy hike starts out on a portion of the PCT in the Donner Summit area then goes up to Flora Lake. It has some great views and is a favorite summer hike. Plan on at least an hour for lunch at Flora Lake. Bring lunch, water, and essentials. Rain cancels. No dogs. Meet in Auburn at Burger King, on Lincoln Way at Foresthill Exit off I-80 at 9:00 am. Leader: Sheila Toner, 530-886-0673.



August 3, Wednesday

Hike (1A) **Long Lake** (Senior Section)
 This is a short hike of approx 3-4 miles to Long Lake, with nice views of Devils Peak in the background. We'll do some scrambling off trail up the unmarked granite to get a view into the Royal Gorge before returning to Long Lake to cool our feet with Devil's Peak in the background. The hike will be fairly level – except for the off trail scrambling up/down from the ridge view point, (approx 200 ft elevation gain/loss). The last approx 2 miles to the trailhead near Devils Peak Warming Hut is via a gravel road. Have lunch, water, and essentials. No dogs. Rain cancels. Meet in Auburn at Burger King, on Lincoln Way at Foresthill Exit off I-80 at 9:00 am. Leader: Sheila Toner 530-886-0673

August 31, Wednesday

Hike (1A) **Little Bald Mt Fire Look out**
 Hike starts at Robinson Flat campgrounds. We'll hike up to the ridge and on to the fire station look out. This is an out and back hike of about 4 miles with an elevation gain/loss of approx 500ft. We'll have lunch at the top while enjoying the awesome 360-degree views of the Sierra Nevada. Have lunch, plenty of water and rain gear in case of showers. No dogs. Rain cancels. Meet in Auburn at Burger King, on Lincoln Way at Foresthill Exit off I-80 at 9:00 am. Leader: Sheila Toner, 530-886-0673; and Leader in Training Barry Anderson, barry.botany@usamedia.tv.

Reversing Beavers' Bad Rap

Beaver biologist experts don't always agree on the best way to "manage" beaver colonies to co-exist with neighbors as they stay busy building and maintaining their dams in urban or rural areas. One urban area that's been dealing successfully with beavers and reaped wonderful results—with no stream impediments to fish passage or flooding, and amazing increases in wildlife diversity—is Martinez, California.

Dr. Heidi Perryman, created Worth a Dam, a nonprofit organization that assists communities with beavers and works to set the record straight on one of California's most maligned animals.

For more information visit www.martinezbeavers.org



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FIELD NOTES

Crescents

Family *Nymphalidae*

Crescents are small butterflies that are part of the brushfoots. They mostly have rounded forewings and orange-and-black patterns above, named for a crescent-shaped spot near the margin of the hindwing below. They have a direct, low flight, with alternating series of flaps and flat-winged glides. Males patrol areas near larval floodplains to find females. Among the crescents there are several cases where very similar species overlap, making identification difficult or sometimes impossible.

Taken from the *Field Guide to Butterflies of North America* by Kenn Kaufman.

Photo by Cat Raymond.

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