



TUOLUMNE GROUP NEWSLETTER

The Sequoia



February Sierra Club Program Will Feature “Geology and Life” – How Geology Connects to the Central Sierra Region

Well-known local geologist Jeff Tolhurst will present a special program at the County library at 480 Greenley Road in Sonora on Wednesday, February 25th, at 7 p.m.!

Jeff will provide photos and examples showing how geology links with our region’s diverse ecosystem – and how different birds and animals use the geologic features of the landscape. The program will discuss past mass extinctions and the potential future of the Sierra Nevada. Come for the compelling photos and enjoy the bonus of learning new information and insight about our vast region.

For 26 years Jeff taught geosciences and geospatial technologies at local Columbia College. He also worked for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Jeff has a Ph.D., M.S., and B.A. in geological sciences and continues to learn about the earth in retirement.



The Tuolumne Group

The Tuolumne Group Executive Committee

meets by Zoom eight times each year to plan local Sierra Club activities and to plan newsletters and upcoming programs.

Without the local Executive Committee, our Sierra Club efforts in our region won't happen.

Meetings generally run about an hour on the third Thursday of the month at 7pm

There are three open positions that need willing volunteers.

For information on how you can join the Executive Committee to help keep our local Group functioning, email Elaine Hagen at:

elainehagen@att.net



National Policies & Mandates Affect Federal Lands of the Region

Politics at the national level will affect BLM and national forest lands this year and likely far into the future. Compared to two years ago, staffing for the local Stanislaus National Forest is much lower due to layoffs, pressure for employees to take early retirement, and some staff simply choosing to leave. There are now fewer biologists to protect wildlife, few soil or watershed specialists to protect water quality, and fewer staff to manage recreation. That compounds the management problems that already existed due to not enough agency staff -- even before downsizing of agencies.

Stanislaus Forest officials have made it clear at stakeholder meetings that the national mandate to ramp up timber production is a top priority. With fewer staff and the new direction to increase logging, there will be challenges managing campgrounds, maintaining 2,000 miles of local roads, and ensuring adequate wildlife protection.

This year will bring widespread logging, construction of fuel breaks, and mastication of brush fields by heavy equipment. On top of the already approved SERAL and SERAL 2.0 "large landscape" projects that allow treatments on vast areas, the still being developed MAC Project will affect an even larger area of national forest land.

As the summer unfolds, Sierra Club members can do your own watchdog monitoring in the local forest. Take photos, take notes, and share any concerns directly with staff at local Forest Service offices.



Yosemite Park Officials Dismiss Day-Use-Reservations for the Firefall event and Recommend No Reservations for the Summer Tourist Season

The Firefall viewing event has soared in popularity. In past years, Yosemite Park officials have pointed to the extremely high numbers of visitors who all crowd into one relatively small section of Yosemite Valley as a solid reason to manage the number of vehicles during the highly publicized Firefall viewing event.

This year new Park superintendent Ray McPadden announced there would be unlimited visitation and no requirement for reservations. He also is recommending that there be no day-use-reservations during the

intensely busy spring/summer/early fall tourist season, when literally millions of visitors often create congestion and traffic jams.

Superintendent McPadden told a recent gathering of local region interests that no final decision had been made for whether to have summer season reservations, but in his view, except for Saturdays, crowd levels during the rest of the week could be managed. The national Sierra Club has repeatedly urged that there be strict limits on the number of vehicles allowed into Yosemite in order to protect precious Park resources and to enable a higher quality visitor experience.

Outings may officially start again soon

Two local Sierra Club members (Joanne McCullough and Mary-Kate Laughlin) recently attended Sierra Club outings training as they work toward becoming certified Outings Leaders. They are now finalizing the Club's outings requirements and will hopefully soon be offering officially sanctioned hikes in our local region.

Sierra Club hikes are a great way to see new places and to meet new friends who share enthusiasm for exploring nature.





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Notes and Updates

Help our local Sierra Club group save money by letting us know that you are willing to receive newsletters by email instead of through the mail.

It costs our Tuolumne Group to print and mail newsletters. You can help the Club to save money by agreeing to switch to receiving the newsletter by email. Just email Mail@sierratuolumne.org and provide your name and mail address so we can make the change on our membership newsletter list.

HAVE IDEAS FOR A MONTHLY PROGRAM? If you know a presenter who might be a good fit for providing a program on topics that fit with the mission and focus of the Sierra Club, please let us know. Contact Group chair Mary Kate Laughlin at marykate.laughlin@gmail.com and share your ideas and suggestions.