



# The Sequoia

## Yosemite Summer Hikes Didn't Disappoint!

By Bob Asquith

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**DRAGON GULCH PROJECT  
TRAIL WORK & FUN OCT 12-13**

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF  
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK**

**TUOLUMNE CHAPTER PARTNERS  
W/SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE**

Late Spring rains worked their magic! We ran out of superlatives to describe the wildflowers we encountered. Week on week, they were super abundant. Hikes took us to Pilot Peak to survey Ferguson Fire damage and in Yosemite – Wapama Falls, Forest Falls, Tamarack Creek, Ackerson Meadow, Lyell Canyon, and Tuolumne Meadows.

All the falls we visited were really roaring with water and many ephemeral falls were flowing as well. Wapama Falls at Hetch Hetchy was particularly awesome.

On to Tenaya Canyon just west of Tenaya Lake. We break out of the forest into the HUGE granite bowl that is directly below Clouds Rest. There is a natural water slide there where we

took a group photo. Virtually everywhere we hiked we encountered wildflower explosions – witness the shooting stars covering meadows on the way to Lukens Lake. We chase Spring up elevation all summer long.

Most of our hikes are less than 8 miles and less than 1500 feet cumulative elevation climb. We hike every Thursday all year long. The rest of the summer we beat the heat by hiking in Yosemite's High Country where it typically is in the high 60's. **Please come join us.**

Follow us via Facebook at – Hiking The 120. Join us any Thursday at 8AM in Groveland. Contact Bob Asquith, Outings Leader at [bobasquith@gmail.com](mailto:bobasquith@gmail.com).



Pausing for a group shot on Tenaya Creek



Wapama bridge on the trail at Hetch Hetchy



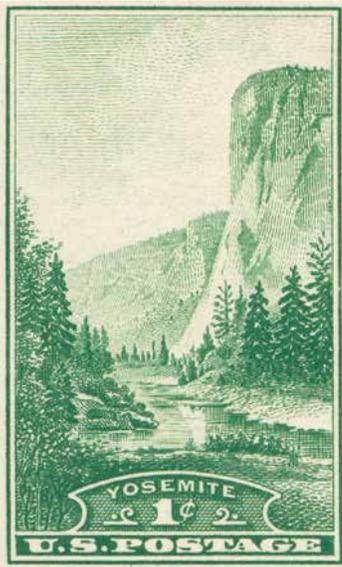
We've encountered 3 bears this season. This one posed for photos.



Shooting Stars at Lukens Meadow

# A Short History of Yosemite

Robert Derlet, Professor Emeritus, UC Davis



*Native Americans of the MeWuk Tribe had lived in Yosemite Valley for centuries before the first US Government exploration party looked into the valley from the high country in 1833. But it was not until the Gold Rush days that travel into the valley by neighboring California settlers became common.*

In the late 1850s hotels and saloons were built, and East Coast newspaper reporters arrived to describe the scenic beauty. By 1860, with tourists traveling to the valley it became clear that it needed protection. Yosemite National Park as we know it today was created in four phases from 1864 to 1906:

## **Phase 1. Yosemite Valley State Park**

California petitioned the US Congress to transfer ownership of the valley to the State of California, which occurred in 1864. A State Park Commission governed the park and granted leases to build hotels and other businesses, and to settle disputes among those with land claims within the valley. Yosemite Valley became a national tourist attraction.

## **Phase 2: Yosemite National Park**

John Muir was instrumental in the creation of the Park. His writing described the beauty of the high country that surrounded the valley, and the threats to the pristine environment posed by grazing of sheep and cattle. Grazing pollut-

ed water in the Tuolumne and Merced Rivers, impacting valley visitors as well as downstream settlements. The value of the High Sierra as a watershed was recognized.

The need to protect large sections of the Tuolumne, Merced and San Joaquin River watersheds resulted in park boundaries being drawn farther to the southeast and southwest than current boundaries. On October 1, 1890 Congress created a “watershed and forest preserve” surrounding the valley by establishing Yosemite National Park. The US Cavalry was assigned the task of governing the new Park.

## **Phase 3: Redrawing of Park boundaries**

In 1905, Congress removed 542 sq miles from the Park. The logging and mining industries considered the southeast and southwest areas to have too much commercial value to be preserved, and had spent years lobbying Congress to redraw the park boundaries. In return, Congress added 113 sq miles as new park in the North East. This new northeast section included the remaining Tuolumne River watershed that had been left out in 1890.

Of note, the City of San Francisco had petitioned the federal government in 1901 to dam the Hetch Hetchy Valley. With the new 1905 boundaries, all the water flowing into Hetch Hetchy valley was protected from pollution, making it the most desirable place in California to get clean drinking water. Did San Francisco influence the redrawing of the Parks boundaries in 1905? Eight years later the Raker Act of 1913 was approved, creating Hetch Hetchy Dam. History has shown that San Francisco’s lobbying of Congress exerted greater influence than that of John Muir and the Sierra Club.

## **Phase 4. Incorporation of the Valley State Park into the National Park**

John Muir, and the Sierra Club spent years urging California to transfer the Valley back to the federal Government. In 1906 the US Congress accepted the recession of the Valley into Yosemite National Park. The Park was complete! Finally, the National Park Service was created in 1916, and management was transferred from the US Cavalry to the newly created Park Service. ■



## Tuolumne Group Assigned Sierra Nevada Alliance Partnership Participant

by Kevin Rice

*It is a pleasure to announce that our Sierra Club Mother Lode Chapter will be participating in the Sierra Nevada Alliance Partnership (SNAP) for the first time. SNAP is a program of the Sierra Nevada Alliance through which members are placed with partner conservation organizations throughout the Sierra Nevada.*

During their terms of service, program participants restore and monitor impaired Sierra watersheds, provide outreach and education to Sierra residents and visitors on environmental issues, and recruit and manage volunteers for a variety of programs. The Tuolumne Group submitted a SNAP application with the Tahoe Group of the Mother Lode Chapter of the Sierra Club, each group seeking to be assigned one SNAP participant. The term of service will be from October 16, 2019 to September 19, 2020, with a time commitment of 1,700 hours, approximately 40 hours per week.

SNAP members gain skills and technical training, are mentored by outstanding environmental leaders, and make a real difference in the communities of the Sierra Nevada. Working closely with the Tuolumne River Trust, the Tuolumne Group member will help to restore and monitor impaired meadow and riparian habitats within the Tuolumne watershed. A living allowance, loan forbearance, and health care benefits are provided during the term of service, as well as an end-of-service education award.

Goals for this position include the mobilization of our membership and the attraction of new Sierra Club members who will actively participate in the Tuolumne Group, particularly from the younger segments of the population. Working with both the Tuolumne River Trust and the Sierra Club, the Tuolumne Group team member will engage with key environmental issues in the Calaveras and Tuolumne regions, gain first-hand field experience in watershed conservation/restoration, and add an impressive accomplishment to their resume. ■

## Dragoon Gulch Trail Project Seeking Volunteers October 12-13

by Karie Lew

*On the second weekend in October (October 12-13, 2019), you are invited to help build a new trail at Dragoon Gulch in Sonora.*

This trail-expansion project is being organized and run, in partnership with the City of Sonora, by Volunteers for Outdoor California (V-O-Cal). V-O-Cal is a nonprofit organization that has been providing a volunteer workforce for trail-maintenance and -construction projects for federal, state, regional, and city agencies for more than a decade. (See V-O-Cal's Web site at [www.v-o-cal.org](http://www.v-o-cal.org) for more information.) This project will be V-O-Cal's first in Sonora, and we would be happy to have you join us.

Volunteer opportunities are available on the trail and around "center camp." You can volunteer one or both days. There is no cost to participate, and you don't have to have any prior trail-building experience. Tools, training, supervision by certified crew leaders, and food (breakfast Saturday through afternoon snacks on Sunday) will be provided. In addition, free camping on Friday and Saturday nights will be available at nearby Woods Creek Park. Ages 14 and up are welcome (though volunteers under age 16 must be accompanied by an adult).

City staff have identified a mile of new single-track trails they would like V-O-Cal to complete over the project weekend. The more volunteers we have, the more likely we are to meet that goal. Come out and be a part of it!

Registration for the project opened in July. Because we set a cap on the number of volunteers we can effectively support, you are strongly encouraged to register for a spot sooner rather than later if you know you can make it. Advance registration also helps us to ensure we have enough food and project mementos for volunteers.

Sign up at [www.tinyurl.com/Dragoon2019](http://www.tinyurl.com/Dragoon2019).

E-mail any questions to:  
[DragoonGulchTrailProject@gmail.com](mailto:DragoonGulchTrailProject@gmail.com).

For some local coverage of the plans for this project, check out the following links:

Union Democrat article: [www.uniondemocrat.com/localnews/6947187-151/volunteer-group-to-add-a-mile-of-trail](http://www.uniondemocrat.com/localnews/6947187-151/volunteer-group-to-add-a-mile-of-trail).

Interview: [www.tctrailhead.blogspot.com/](http://www.tctrailhead.blogspot.com/).  
Look under "TCT #18 – Karie Lew." ■

### MEMBER PROFILE



**Barbara Balen**  
**Practicing Passion**

by Todd Stolp

When interviewing an individual for a profile piece, we hope to gather a historical image of that person's life to inspire others. Therefore, collecting personal information is an important part of the task. Conducting an interview with Barbara Balen, the conversation seems to readily veer away from herself and towards her passion and ample knowledge of water resources, requiring a bit of voyeuristic effort to steer the conversation back to the details of her personal life. If only for this extraordinary combination of personal humility and passion for environmental causes, Barbara is a noteworthy environmental advocate.

With Tuolumne County roots 50 years deep, Barbara's interest in the environment was alive even before her mother gave her a package of marigold seeds. She attended Columbia College in the 1970s and transferred to Stanislaus State to procure her bachelor's degree in anthropology and archeology. Barbara recalls that legislative trends had shifted with the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1970, which, in part, acknowledged "... decades of environmental neglect..." and sought to "... maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony..." She became involved in archeological projects, like excavating and preserving the Me-Wuk roundhouse at Columbia College. This led to her 30+ year career of protecting cultural resources and restoring cultural landscapes with the U.S. Forest Service.

Barbara is a past chairperson and remains on the Board of the Tuolumne Utilities District. She is currently serving her second year as the board president of the Mountain County Water Resources Association, a 501 (c) (6) organization whose mission includes the protection and enhancement of Mountain County water resources. She balances her environmental advocacy with the inspiration provided by her son Bret's family and her grandson.



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Tuolumne Group Executive Committee meets monthly at the Tuolumne Utility District boardroom, 18885 Nugget Rd. in East Sonora. For information on attending our next meeting, contact Trudy Craig at the email listed below.

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**Treasurer** Kevin Rice, [kjrice@ucdavis.edu](mailto:kjrice@ucdavis.edu)

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**Chapter Delegate** Kevin Rice, [kjrice@ucdavis.edu](mailto:kjrice@ucdavis.edu)

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**Secretary & Programs, Open Positions**

**We welcome your input and feedback.**

## NOTES & UPDATES

The Sequoia Newsletter is designed to provide local Sierra Club members with a trusted source of information on people, events, and issues impacting our environment. Members can also find additional information on our updated web page: [www.sierratuolumne.org](http://www.sierratuolumne.org).

### >> OCTOBER 12-13: DRAGON GULCH TRAIL PROJECT

Register now to help build the new trail at Dragoon Gulch in Sonora. Volunteer for one or both days. Free meals and camping provided at Woods Creek Park in Sonora. Sponsored by Volunteers for Outdoor California in partnership with the City of Sonora. Be a part of this unique community event. Minimum age 14. Under 16 must be accompanied by adult. Learn more and sign up at [tinyurl.com/Dragoon2019](http://tinyurl.com/Dragoon2019).

### INTERESTED IN RECEIVING NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL?

If you would like to receive our newsletter via email either instead of, or in addition to our printed edition, email your request to [mail@sierratuolumne.org](mailto:mail@sierratuolumne.org).

### GET INVOLVED

Interested in getting more involved with our Tuolumne Chapter? There are many ways to volunteer for whatever time you are able to give. Contact Co-Chair Trudy Craig by email at [broadinski48@yahoo.com](mailto:broadinski48@yahoo.com) to find out ways to help. There are also opportunities to participate in forest hikes and projects occurring throughout the year. Find out more on our website, [www.sierratuolumne.org](http://www.sierratuolumne.org).

