



# The Sequoia

## Local “Roadless Areas” Offer Summer Season Backcountry Adventures

Nearly all Sierra Club members are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the goal of preserving Wilderness Areas on federal lands. Those Congressionally-designated wild places are legally required to be permanently protected in a pristine, natural condition.

But many Sierra Club members may not know what a “Roadless Area” describes or what the status of such an area may be. Just as the name implies, Roadless Areas are wild, natural areas on federal lands without roads or development. They are not official “Wilderness” areas because Congress has never approved Wilderness status for these areas. But many Roadless Areas are just as wild and are far less crowded and often more pristine than the major Wilderness Areas that get most visitor use. The Tuolumne Group is fortunate to have 13 Roadless Areas within the vast Stanislaus National Forest. Many only exist as wild areas due to years of intense struggles by conservation activists to save the areas from road construction, planned clearcuts, or proposed off-road-vehicle routes.

Some of the most popular local Roadless Areas include the Pacific Valley Roadless Area high in the mountains on the south side of Highway 4, the Bald Peak Roadless Area which stretches for miles above Highway 108 from the Clark Fork east to the top of Sonora Pass, and the Tuolumne Roadless Area, which includes a broad section of low elevation river canyon habitat with whitewater rafting and spring wildflowers.

### BELL AND EAGLE ROADLESS AREAS

The Bell Roadless Area has trailheads leading into it at Bell Meadow, Crabtree trailhead, and Box Springs. It features large aspen groves, numerous lush meadows, rushing streams, and scattered old growth forest groves. The trailhead at Bell Meadow can be quickly accessed south of Pinecrest, and the main trail leads almost immediately into classic Sierra scenic beauty with granite cliffs, meadows, ancient trees, and chances to see a wide diversity of migratory birds and other wildlife.

The Eagle Roadless Area extends for miles along the northern edge of the Emigrant Wilderness. Hiking south from Groundhog Meadow into an area known as McCormick Pocket provides opportunities to see huge, scattered old growth trees in a pristine forest setting. Lava rock formations are so dazzling it’s surprising that far more hikers or backpackers don’t visit the area. And similar to the Bell area, the Eagle Roadless Area contains a wide diversity of habitat that benefits rare and common wildlife species.

The Carson-Iceberg Wilderness and Emigrant Wilderness are always good destinations for those wanting to go into pristine areas with well-established trails and lots of fellow visitors. But the Eagle and Bell Roadless Areas provide their own unique wild experiences, and often with far more chances to view wildlife, and with far more solitude. ■

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TUOLUMNE GROUP  
SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES  
LOCAL CONSERVATION UPDATES

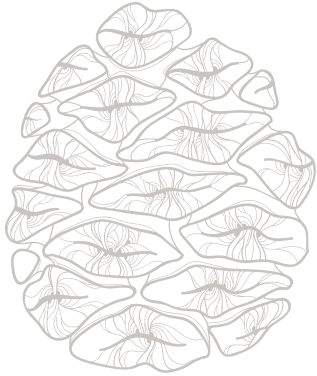
*Thanks to all of the front line workers and our sincere wishes for good health to you and your families in the months ahead!*



*Hiker pauses to take in the beauty of a summer day at Clear Lake in the Bell Roadless Area*

# Tuolumne Group Sponsors Conservation and Resource Management Scholarships

In the tradition of Mac Waggoner scholarships, our Tuolumne Group is directing funds from the Sierra Club Foundation to students in our area. Columbia Community College Foundation helped us to find candidates. Awardees were selected based on their academic record, community involvement, and future goals. We are excited to provide each with a modest scholarship, supported by your membership dues.



**Michael Reis** (above) “thrives on the outdoors”. He was fishing at Spicer reservoir one day when he met workers at the dam. This changed his path and he put his livelihood on the line to attend Columbia Community College (CCC) with a better career in mind. After earning dual AA degrees in Natural Resources and Water Management, he is continuing with Cal State University transferable classes. As an academic star, Mike is on the CCC President’s list. “Being rewarded with a natural resources scholarship I feel would be a key ingredient to my success as a student and professional.” He will apply to summer internships in fields from fire work, dam and hydro operation, to species monitoring and control. Furthering his education at a four year university is next on his horizon.

**Anthony White-Ramos’** interest in conservation of our environment and management of natural resources was planted when Anthony was young and attending Camp Jack Hazard, hiking the Emigrant Wilderness. Those roots took hold as he began a career with CAL Fire, which ended abruptly due to injury by a fallen tree. Yet he took away a “deeper understand-

ing of the devastation disasters have upon natural resources on which we are so heavily reliant”. Anthony is currently pursuing an Associate of Science degree in Water Resource Management with a goal to earn a Bachelor of Science. He has received academic honors and is on the Dean’s List. He is also earning a credential in UAV/Drone Mapping technology, utilizing Geographic Information Systems. He is interested in applications for incident command from an aerial perspective, routing for road or water channelization, erosion recovery solutions to manage implementation of new growth, and to determine catchment area and quality of water flow for flood control purposes.



*Anthony White-Ramos & Columbia College Forest Survey Instructor, Lara McNicol*



*Kathy Marquez (Ranger) assisting with interpretive program “What’s Bugging You?” at Summit Ranger Station.*

**Kathy Marquez** came to Columbia Community College as a career change student, earning AS degrees in both Water Resource Management and Natural Resources. She has worked summers at USFS Summit Ranger Station at Pinecrest as an Interpretive Ranger, while during college terms she has worked as a tutor and has been a leader in the Columbia Forestry/Natural Resources Club. Kathy has a California Naturalist Certification and is now completing an AS in Forestry, with a goal to earn a Bachelor’s degree.



## Yosemite Park Reopening Plans

As this newsletter went to press, Yosemite Park officials were publicizing their plan to open Yosemite to the public sometime in June. But instead of simply returning to the status quo, Park officials aim to allow roughly 50% of typical levels of visitation until there is an improvement in the Covid-19 situation. Those with reservations at lodging inside the Park or at two Yosemite Valley campgrounds will automatically receive Park entry permits. The rest of roughly 1,700 additional day-use entry permits will likely be made available through a lottery system at Recreation.gov online. Park staff admits there will be little ability for the Park to enforce social distancing, and that it will be up to visitors to self-regulate their behavior to minimize risk of contamination. Stay safe out there!

## FERC Hydro Relicensing for Lyons & South Fork Stanislaus River

After years of planning and field studies, PG&E is pressing forward with a plan (called the Phoenix Project) that is heavily slanted towards favoring TUD water supply demands rather than balancing those demands with the need to leave adequate minimum river flows in the South Fork Stanislaus River below Lyons Reservoir. PG&E will soon file its final proposal with the FERC – the federal agency that will consider approving PG&E’s river management proposal for the next 40 years or longer. CSERC, the local environmental group that works closely with the Sierra Club, is a key participant in the PG&E process and is attempting to a feasible increase in river flows to benefit fish, amphibians, and other aquatic resources.



**Olivia Hunter-McElroy** (above) spent a couple of years outdoors with AmeriCorps providing hurricane disaster relief and working with Habitat for Humanity. She also received her inter-agency certification for woodland firefighting. At CCC, she will complete her Fire Technology Certification this spring and an AS in Environmental Science next year. She plans to continue at UC Santa Cruz to complete a Bachelor’s Degree in Earth Science with a concentration in Environmental Geology. Olivia plans to work as a firefighter during summers as well as on geology and environmental studies in national parks.

**Daniel Hill** caught the outdoor hiking, fishing and camping bug at age 5 on a trip to Yellowstone National Park. Every year that he would go back, refreshed his interest and made him want to help preserve the outdoors for future generations. Spending the summer of 2019 attending classes at Baker Station strengthened this passion even more. Having begun attending Columbia College at 16, he is now working towards two Associate’s of Science degrees in Forestry and Natural Resources, and then he will be on to a 4-year University.



*Daniel Hill helps manage a burn pile as part of the Fire-Fuels Management class at Columbia College*



*Cheyenne Lewis*

**Cheyenne Lewis** began her studies with plant identification and fell in love with forestry and natural resources at Columbia College. She has set her sights on Humboldt State University where she can study in the Aracata Community Forest and work for a Masters Degree in Forestry and Natural Resources. Cheyenne plans to pursue a career as an environmental consultant.

Congratulations to all of our scholarship awardees for the hard work they put into their education. The last few months have been a challenge for the planet and everyone on it. Hope can sometimes seem in short supply. Supporting these inspired students is one way we can reach out in making the future a time of healing and renewal for the earth and all of its inhabitants. ■

Thanks to Kevin Rice and Karen Swanson for their efforts in coordinating these scholarships.



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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 Elaine Hagen at the email listed below.

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**We welcome your input and feedback.**

## NOTES & UPDATES

### GET INVOLVED • TAKE ACTION

Today, years of hard-fought environmental protections are under threat—and to influence governments and businesses, we need everyone to speak up and shout out. Explore how you can get involved: go to [www.sierraclub.org/take-action](http://www.sierraclub.org/take-action)

### CONNECT WITH YOUR SIERRA CLUB TUOLUMNE GROUP

Want to get more involved with your local Sierra Club group? Interested in joining our Executive Committee? Have a great idea for a local Sierra Club presentation? There are many ways to volunteer for whatever time you are able to share. Members are invited to attend our monthly ExCom meetings. New energy and ideas are welcome! Email your ideas to Membership Chair, Elaine Hagen at [elainehagen@att.net](mailto:elainehagen@att.net).

### GO GREEN - RECEIVE NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL!

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

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).

