

# PEATDUSTER

Newsletter for the Delta-Sierra Group, Mother Lode Chapter

Visit us at [www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/deltasierra](http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/deltasierra)

Volume 40 Number 2 P-1

Four editions per year

June July August 2009

## Luis Ireland Conservationist of the Year Award goes to Eric Parfrey

The Luis Ireland Conservationist of the Year Award is a coveted award which annually recognizes one outstanding individual from the Mother Lode Chapter. Eric Parfrey received this award at the Annual Awards Banquet, for his efforts to ensure that the Stockton General Plan Update 2035 include provisions to incorporate planning to increase infill development in an effort to reduce sprawl into agricultural land and to reduce the carbon footprint of the city. Eric has devoted many hours and much effort to encourage better planning of land use as the city moves into the 21st Century. We congratulate and thank Eric for pursuing his vision of a more livable city.

## Peatduster Editor/Webmaster recognized

The Executive Committee of Delta Sierra Group is delighted to announce the selection of Robert Evans for the 2009 Delta-Sierra Group award. Robert was recognized at the Mother Lode Chapter awards banquet held in Sacramento, May 2. Each year the Group recognizes a member for extraordinary volunteer efforts that help to make the Sierra Club a more effective organization. Several years ago, Robert volunteered to become the editor of the newsletter, the Peatduster, as well as to develop and maintain the Group's website.



## Welcome new Executive Committee member Laura Voss

The Executive Committee announces the recent appointment of Laura Voss to fill the term left vacant by the retirement of Paul Plathe who remains in his active position as Outings Chair. Laura has recently returned to this area from Davis where she completed her degree at the University of California at Davis and now teaches for Lodi Unified School District. She has played an active role volunteering for activities including the Sandhill Crane Festival and the Peaceful Holiday Faire. Recently she has accepted the important role of contacting new members, who fill out an interest survey, in order to invite them to become more active members of DSG.

## Thank you Paul

We thank Paul Platte for his years of tirelessly committing to the Executive Committee meetings where he could be counted on for his solutions to existing quagmires. Paul continues in his capacity as Outings Chair and as leader of the active group of Gorge Scramblers. Thank you Paul for your dedication.

## Earth Day thanks

We wish to thank Mike Molamphy and all those who helped at our table on an unseasonably hot Earth Day at Victory Park. Dale Stocking brought the much appreciated shade. Gina Bloom, Rick and Marie Mielbrecht, and Mike's daughter Lisa helped sell t-shirts brought by Kathy Heib. Mike's wife Jean helped all day also. If you missed this Earth Day event, please come next year; it's a worthwhile community gathering.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

## Our National Parks: Vision for the Second Century

By John Byrne and Vicky Hoover

In 2016, America's National Park Service will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Sierra Club's National Parks and Monuments Team wants to share with you our exciting vision for the second century of the National Park Service. National parks are America's uniquely marvelous contribution to the world. Our vision focuses on three major concerns that people didn't have 100 years ago, but that today are prevalent in our society: natural areas disappearing, people separated from nature, and the onset of global climate change.

**First, the disappearance of our natural areas** - It used to be that development occurred as islands in a sea of nature, but today national parks are the natural islands in a sea of development. We see that national parks are needed to preserve important representative places of our natural environment. We envision a significant expansion of our National Park system so that every major natural eco-region in our country will be represented by at least one national park or equivalent reserve.

All major ecological regions in the United States should have a national park or similar protected area to represent it. Large areas of the country are presently left out. Let's fill these gaps. A preliminary gap analysis shows that we must create 38 new National Parks or similar areas, and expand or change designation in 28 others. This will protect habitat for the biodiversity of our flora and fauna that make up our natural world, as ecosystems evolve and adapt to global climate change.

By filling the gaps, by having protected natural areas represent all parts of our natural world, we can not only better enjoy nature; we can learn what we must do to protect the world in which we and our fellow species live. An expanded network of parks is also needed to provide nearby places to visit for more people, both to lessen generation of greenhouse gases from flying and driving to parks and to provide convenient close to home places for people to appreciate their natural and cultural heritage.

After reaching its peak 20 years ago per capita visitation to our national parks is down about 20 percent. Varying gasoline costs, economic constraints, and public awareness that traveling long distances to visit national parks generates greenhouse gases will aggravate this phenomenon. Well, if people won't come to National Parks - bring National Parks to the people: establish new ones, closer-to-home. Dorothy should not have to put on those glittery shoes and get on a tornado to Oz to experience nature.

**Second, connecting people with national parks.** - Our heavily urbanized society is losing its connections to nature. A generation of children is growing up mostly indoors and often glued to the Internet, with a great problem of obese youth. Experience of nature becomes more virtual, less direct. We see national parks able to coax people, especially young people, out into nature, and we envision parks becoming more inviting and attractive to them.

We need to expand education programs in national parks to help all visitors learn about our natural world. The education programs should relate to all courses of study, academic and non-academic, and should be connected to the Internet so national parks can be learned about and appreciated by everybody, all the time. Programs for on-site visits should attract teachers and students. Classrooms should be linked to parks though the internet throughout the academic year—as an inducement to visit national parks.

We should consider reducing park entrance fees, not raising them. Entrance fees discourage use, aggravating an already significant decline in visitation, and they disproportionately affect people with lower income. Entrance fees contribute but a nickel to the National Park Service budget dollar. We can easily afford to expand our National Park system, make it more available to people, and reap the benefits. (Continue on Page 3.)



(Our National Parks: Vision for the Second Century - continued from Page 2.)

**Third, fighting global climate change.** Not only was this not around 100 years ago — even ten years ago — it wasn't a big concern for many people. We envision parks addressing global warming in at least three ways:

1. By educating visitors on the problems and how they, as individuals can help out in their daily lives.
- 2.. By using national parks to conduct scientific research on changes that are happening so that we can see what nature is doing and learn what we must not do to mitigate the effects of climate change; and by assuring the wild areas in parks will stay wild, such as through wilderness designation, so that national parks can form the core of broad protected areas to make wildlife habitat more resilient. The ability to move as the climate changes will allow wildlife adaptations essential for species survival.
3. By making the parks themselves a model of zero emissions in their energy systems and particularly in transportation, which uses a lot of carbon-dioxide emitting energy. We see all our national parks vigorously promoting public transportation, so that people will be able to go to national parks on trains or other public transit and, once there, will be able to appreciate our natural world without a car.

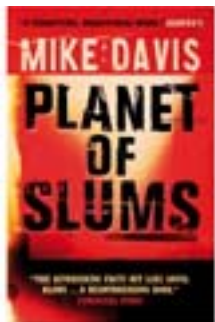
The United States played the pioneering role in inventing the National Park idea and using parks to bring nature closer to life's critical needs. But today we lag behind other countries in using national parks to learn about, protect and perpetuate our natural world. National parks are ideal places to learn how our natural world reacts and adapts to change. As the potential consequences and the need to react to global climate change become more and more apparent, these natural areas will take center stage and assume a critical role.

Expanding our system of National Parks should be the prime goal of our Second Century of our National Park System. Please help us fulfill this goal so that national parks can play an instrumental role in making a better world for us, for our children and for our grandchildren.

To learn more about the National Parks and Monuments Team join our efforts, propose new parks near you, or to share concerns for our national parks, contact chair John Byrne at [jbyrne\\_97@yahoo.com](mailto:jbyrne_97@yahoo.com) or liaison Vicky Hoover at [Vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org](mailto:Vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org). And why not check out our new Handbook for Expanding National Parks at: <http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/conservation/activist-network/national-parks/Default.aspx>  
(Editors note: This link requires you logon the Clubhouse. The user name is clubhouse and the password is explore.)

\* \* \*

### **Planet of Slums, by Mike Davis - Reviewed by George Turner for the Peatduster**



Here is a contemporary, real life horror story for a cold winter's night, guaranteed to frighten you out of your wits, chill you to the bone, and give you recurring nightmares! Eye-opening and heartbreaking, this much needed expose spells out in lucid detail the hopelessness of over one billion people who live in the most abject poverty and filth, with few if any of the basic necessities of life, in our third world cities – even many in Europe. Exiled from the world's formal economy, one out of six people present a human disaster of unbelievable proportions. Davis presents a well written picture of this catastrophe, chock full of documented facts. Planet of Slums is a must read for anyone who considers him/herself even slightly knowledgeable about the current state of the world and the looming threats of natural and manmade chaos, Godzilla in the making!



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

## Stockton legal victory helps prod local government on global warming

A great legal settlement obtained in October by the Sierra Club in a case challenging the city of Stockton's General Plan update has demonstrated the power of litigation as part of an overall campaign to prod counties and cities to address global warming. Reinforcing this message, a court order issued on March 19 found for the Sierra Club in its challenge to the city of Tulare's General Plan update and agreed with the Sierra Club on all its global-warming claims.

The Club challenged Stockton's updated General Plan under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), arguing, among other things, that the Environmental Impact Report did not adequately address the increased greenhouse-gas emissions from the proposed expansion of the city's sphere of influence and the large residential development projects proposed well outside existing city limits.

The groundbreaking settlement among the Club, the city, and the state attorney general, addresses these climate impacts through a Climate Action Plan, to be prepared by the city with oversight from a volunteer advisory committee comprised of representatives from environmental, non-profit, labor, business, and development interests. The plan must include greenhouse-gas inventories; a comprehensive transit program; "green" building standards for all new residential, municipal, and commercial buildings, which must consistently achieve the top 25% of city green-building measures in the state; proposed General Plan amendments that require and promote infill and downtown development projects; and amendments to the General Plan to ensure that growth on the outskirts of the city is not "out of balance with development of infill." Many of these measures must be submitted to the City Council for approval within the one year from the date of the settlement.

This settlement will bring meaningful reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions through the study of emissions, changes to transportation and building standards, and reductions in sprawl development. We believe that we can achieve similar victories around the state. This case demonstrates how a CEQA lawsuit, when brought as part of a larger campaign, can have more than just procedural results and can lead to major substantive improvements under the right circumstances.

The case also had political ramifications. When the city's old guard embarrassed itself by resisting a settlement that was clearly in the city's best interests, this made a great campaign issue for the Club and its Stockton allies. Voters elected a more progressive City Council, including a very "green" new mayor, Ann Johnston. Mother Lode Chapter leaders have reported a remarkable turnaround in the attitudes of top city staff, and the local political atmosphere has shifted so dramatically that the developer was forced to abandon an effort to pass a referendum aimed at killing the settlement.

Moreover, chapter leaders kept track of all other related land-use approvals, and wrote comments objecting to the threatened additions of sprawl areas in the city's sphere of influence. Due to momentum from the settlement agreement, the Club was able to block the worst aspects of that "sphere of influence" amendment.

(Continued on Page 7.)



## No "drill, baby, drill" off California - by Barbara Boxer

On Jan. 16, 2009, just days before leaving office, the Bush administration gave one last gift to its allies in the oil and gas industry: a five-year plan by the Interior Department's Minerals Management Service to open nearly all of our nation's coastline to offshore drilling – including California's pristine coast, from San Diego to the Oregon border.

Fortunately, within weeks of President Obama's inauguration, his new Interior Secretary, Ken Salazar, put the plan on hold, calling it a "headlong rush of the worst kind" that was made with "almost no consultation from states, industry or community input." As Californians, we should speak with one voice to tell the new administration, unequivocally, that oil and gas drilling off our coast would be an environmental and economic disaster.

This is not our first battle to protect our coast. In the 1970s, President Jimmy Carter's Interior secretary, Cecil Andrus, came to California after the oil embargo to explore the idea of new offshore oil and gas leases. In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan's Interior secretary, James Watt, made a desperate push to build new oil rigs off our coast. Now the "drill, baby, drill" mantra could once again put California's coast in peril.

For Californians, our coast is not only a God-given environmental treasure and our legacy to our children and grandchildren; it is also a powerful engine of our economic growth. Ocean-related tourism, recreation and fishing generate \$23 billion in economic activity for our state each year and support 390,000 jobs.

We also know the devastating consequences of drilling. A 1969 blowout at an offshore oil rig near Santa Barbara blackened 35 miles of coastline and killed nearly 4,000 seabirds. Supporters of drilling tell us the technology has improved. If so, why is it that the same oil rig spilled another 1100 gallons of crude oil into the Pacific Ocean just last year?

It is not just the catastrophic spills that worry us. The National Academy of Sciences estimates that small spills and discharges released an average of 2 million gallons of oil per year during the 1990s- 25 percent more oil than was released from tanker accidents. The routine release of these toxins accumulates in marine organisms, including the fish we eat.

The seismic surveys used to estimate oil and gas resources have been shown to be harmful to whales, other marine mammals and fish. And there are negative impacts on shore as well: The oil rigs, pipelines and other infrastructure needed for drilling can displace businesses and devalue coastal properties.

There is no reason to endanger California's environment and economy. According to data from the Interior Department, 80 percent of the oil on the Outer Continental Shelf is in areas that have already been opened to oil and gas leasing, but oil companies are producing on only 21 percent of these available leases.

And oil companies hold 68 million acres of onshore and offshore leases that they have still not developed - leases that could nearly double U.S. oil production. Why should we open up unspoiled areas of our coast to drilling when oil companies are not taking advantage of areas already open to them?

It is time for a new and better energy policy. We need to focus on making the investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency that will create new jobs, reduce our dependence on oil and help us fight global warming. In California, our entrepreneurs and scientists are leading the way toward a clean energy future. We can meet our energy needs and grow our economy without putting one of our most valuable assets - our magnificent coast - at risk.

*Barbara Boxer represents California in the U.S. Senate.*



### Giving Back to Wilderness - by Elaine Gorman

During a mid-March 2009, 6-day trip to Utah's Escalante River in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, five Sierra Club members helped backcountry ranger Bill Wolverton to eradicate Russian Olive. This invasive, exotic species fills the canyons in the desert southwest, tapping into scarce water sources, crowding out native plants, and scratching innocent hikers with evil spikes. Bill and other work crews had cut down the Russian Olive the previous fall, and our job was to haul the cut material to safe areas for burning. Although the work was hard, we all had a feeling of accomplishment when we had cleared areas of this noxious weed in the beautiful riparian cottonwood forest.

Being in the Escalante River canyon was truly magical -- our camp was located near ancient rock art on a high red sandstone cliff. The stars were brilliant each night as we watched the passing of the Zodiac. On our "free" day, Bill led us on an adventure in upper Ringtail Canyon. This slot canyon provided us with many opportunities to practice (or in my case, learn) canyoning skills such as shimmying, bridging, and squeezing through narrow passages. Later, in Neon Canyon, we walked to the Golden Cathedral, where eons of water erosion have formed tunnels and arches in the canyon walls.

As we climbed out of the canyon toward our vehicles on the last day, we marveled at the extensive nocturnal animal traffic, as evidenced by all sizes and shapes of tracks in the red sand. Desert wildflowers had started to unfurl their petals like banners. At the trailhead, we celebrated our hard work and adventure with some warm beverages before we headed into town. Muchisimas gracias to Paul Plathe, Delta-Sierra Group outings leader extraordinaire, for all of his organizing that made this trip possible. Participants Russ Grant, Michael McEuen, John Schwind, and Ranger Bill Wolverton all contributed to making this a memorable outing -- by preparing great dinners, regaling me with their stories of past outings, and not laughing as I "butt-walked" the steep slick rock. Thanks to all of you for an outstanding week.

If wilderness is your passion, and you are interested in channeling some of that passion into benefiting the wilderness that you cherish, there are many opportunities to restore habitat, build trails, and provide other volunteer services. Check out local and national Sierra Club service trips. Also many organizations such as Sierra Club's Desert Committee, Wilderness Volunteers, Student Conservation Association, Pacific Crest Trail Assoc. and REI, offer service outings. And if wiping out Russian Olive is your thing, contact Ranger Bill Wolverton by visiting his progress page at:

<http://www.math.utah.edu/~sfolias/canyontales/wolverton/articles.php>

(Editor's note: Photographs of this trip can be found on our web site.)

### Clair Tappaan Starry Night Weekend, August 14-16, 2009

Staff at Clair Tappaan Lodge have organized a Gala Anniversary Celebration to celebrate 75 years of Clair Tappaan Lodge and 85 years of Hutchinson Lodge. This celebration is an opportunity to secure the long-term viability of the "Sierra Club at Donner Summit" as a continuing part of the Sierra Club and its conservation mission. We have a link on our website so you can learn more about this fun event.



## Membership

Yes, I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage.  
My check is enclosed.

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed, payable to Sierra Club

Please charge my  Mastercard  Visa Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES      INDIVIDUAL    JOINT**

INTRODUCTORY	\$25	
REGULAR	\$39	\$47
SUPPORTING	\$75	\$100
CONTRIBUTING	\$150	\$175
LIFE	\$1000	\$1250
SENIOR	\$24	\$32
STUDENT	\$24	\$32
LIMITED INCOME	\$24	\$32

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your chapter newsletter.



**F94QW 0901 -1**  
Enclose check and mail to:  
**Sierra Club**  
**P.O. Box 52968**  
**Boulder, CO 80322-2968**

## Executive Committee and Staff

- Co Chair/Population - Nancy Ballot
- Co Chair/Global Warming - Rick Mielbrecht
- Secretary - Conni Bock
- Treasurer - Lee Fennell
- Conservation Chair - Dale Stocking
- Programs - Herb Reinelt
- Outings - Paul Plathe
- Publicity - Conni Bock
- Global Warming - (open)
- Earth Day Coordinator - Mike Molamphy
- Sales - Kathy Hieb
- At-Large - Monica Foster
- At-Large - Knute Momberg
- At-Large - Laura Voss
- Peatduster Adviser - Trevor Atkinson
- Peatduster Editor - Robert Evans
- Webmaster - Robert Evans

(To contact these persons please go to our website shown on Page 1.)

(Stockton legal victory - continued from Page 4.)

Factors that made the Stockton litigation such a huge success included: sophisticated chapter activists working with their attorneys to devise a comprehensive campaign strategy with litigation only one of a number of tactics; targeting of a General Plan, rather than individual development projects in isolation; involvement of a highly sophisticated law firm with a track record of dramatic results using CEQA litigation; effective work in advance of the litigation to build the administrative record; effective outreach to, and coordination with, the state attorney general's office; "taking delivery" by settling the case.

In short, the Sierra Club's multi-pronged strategy in Stockton was extremely effective. In the words of our lead lawyer, "we couldn't ask for a more inspiring client!" We hope to replicate such campaign-driven results in other cities and counties.

The Sierra Club was represented by the law firm of Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger in its Stockton litigation and settlement. Babak Naficy represented the Club in its challenge to the city of Tulare's General Plan.





**SIERRA CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892

**DELTA-SIERRA GROUP**  
P.O. BOX 9258  
STOCKTON, CA 95208

**NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION**  
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
**PERMIT NUMBER 217**  
**STOCKTON, CA**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ **\$25**                      **\$50**                      **\$??** ★

★ **SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL** ★

★ **SIERRA CLUB** ★

★ Your financial contribution means a lot to us. By supporting the Delta-Sierra Group's Foundation account you support Sierra Club's work in your own backyard. Your contribution is tax deductible. Please add your return address to your check and mail it to: ★

★ **Sierra Club Foundation** ★

★ **Delta-Sierra Group** ★

★ **P.O. Box 9258** ★

★ **Stockton, Ca. 95208** ★

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**OPTOMETRY**

**VISION EXAMS**

**EYEGLASSES**

**CONTACTS**

Protect and improve your vision with regular eye exams. Call today for your appointment: **957-2110**

**Sierra Club members:**  
10% discount for non-insured members.  
10% of all fees will be donated to the Delta-Sierra Group.

Michael J. Molamphy, O.D.  
1746 Grand Canal Boulevard  
Suite 15  
Stockton, California 95207

**ORTHODONTICS**

**Dale E. Stocking, D.D.S.**  
Specialist in Orthodontics

3427 Deer Park Drive, Suite D  
Stockton, California 95219

Phone: 209-477-3977 Cell: 209-471-3113



“Most people are on the world, not in it - have no conscious sympathy or relationship to anything about them - undiffused, separate, and rigidly alone like marbles of polished stone, touching but separate.”

*John Muir*