



The Sequoia

4 Reasons to Hike with Groveland Group in 2020

By Outings Leader Bob Asquith

#1 Amazing Wildflowers, Wildlife and Wildlands

Astonishing – that describes the wildflowers we found from the top of Table Mtn in Jamestown in early Spring to Bennettville at Tioga Pass on the last Thursday of August. We chase the wildflower bloom up elevation from March through August. On one hike, we identified forty-four (44) wildflowers. On another, we lost count of the fields and fields of Shooting Stars. Pictured here is the Red Hills near Chinese Camp in full Spring clothes.

#2 TV Appearances!

We go places other dream of. And, by submitting photos to local television, those others can share our experiences. We have appeared on TV more than 50 times, as in the Table Mountain photo shown.

#3 Great Places

We hiked on 50 Thursdays in 2019. Over the past 38 years, we have collected well over 130 hikes that range from 5 to 10 miles in length with climbs of 500 to 1800 ft. We hike rain, snow, or shine. Many of the places we go are not in hiking guides – trails less traveled – they provide unique perspectives into our Tuolumne County.

#4 Great Fellowship

Our hikes usually have 15-30 hikers, many hiking each week. Some come from as far as Stockton & Turlock. In the year ahead, we plan on seeing bears (3 in 2019), waterfalls, wildflowers, & spectacular scenery. Please join us!

Follow us via Facebook at – Hiking The 120. Join us any Thursday at 8AM (Summer) or 9AM (Winter) in Groveland. Contact Bob Asquith, Outings leader at bobasquith@gmail.com ■



Chasing wildflowers – a noble pursuit.



Secure your celebrity status!



Sharing something beautiful on every hike



Friendly, adventurous fellow travelers make for great outings.

INSIDE

A PERILOUS PROPOSAL PREVENTS PROPER PROTECTIONS

THE SHARED BENEFITS OF FOREST COLLABORATIVE GROUPS

TUOLUMNE RIVER TRUST GUIDED GROUP OUTINGS FOR 2020

JOIN OUR GROVELAND HIKING GROUP FOR A HIKE ANY THURSDAY >>>>

Email Bob Asquith, Outings Leader: bobasquith@gmail.com

Look for photos from recent outings on our "Hiking the 120" Facebook page



Our hiking outings often finish with a visit to a local eatery.

New EPA Rulemaking Proposal Threatens to Limit Applications of Public Health & Environmental Research

By Todd Stolp, MD

“WHILE THE MISSION OF THE FDA CENTERS ON THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH, THE EPA FOCUSES ON THE INTERESTS OF THE PLANET AND ITS INHABITANTS, AND SCIENCE IS THE ULTIMATE TOOL FOR PURSUIT OF ALL THESE INTERESTS.”

Perhaps the most revealing part of the new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (E.P.A.) rulemaking proposal is its title: *Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science*. In November, the New York Times reported that the E.P.A. proposal will limit the way science is used to write public health rules. Indeed, the language included in the E.P.A. proposal advances the intent of Executive Order 13777 described by previous EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in March 2017, “to reduce the regulatory burdens agencies place on the American people.” The counterproductive and dangerous policy of diminishing applications of scientific research while simultaneously deregulating industries that pose the most potent threats to our environment is a recipe for disaster.

The first question worth asking is what is meant by the term “Regulatory Science.” Efforts to define regulatory science have been debated for the past 50 years, with the most contentious issue centered on whether science used to support regulatory policy is inherently different than science outside the regulatory and political world. Issues in the debate would include scientific ethics and very tricky distinctions between private and public interests in intellectual property. Is it the science itself that is somehow different, or is it simply that its conclusions must be held to a more stringent level of certainty? Specific examples for debate might include the recent imprisonment of He Jiankui for genetically modifying human embryos in China, the use of neonicotinoid pesticides around the world and politically imposed limitations on public health research related to firearm violence in the United States.

While few are likely to argue that basic scientific principals are different for science that is used to support public policy and science that is not, a risk/benefit analysis is intrinsic and relevant to all scientific research, most obviously in the realm of medical science. For this reason, the agency most often wielding the term “regulatory science” has been the Federal Drug Administration (FDA). While the mission of the FDA centers on the interests of public health, the EPA focuses on the interests of the planet and its inhabitants, and science is the ultimate tool for pursuit of all these interests.

One specific change proposed by the EPA in the new rule would limit the use of data that is not publicly available. This would eliminate the use of many published studies that rely upon the use of anonymized personal health information (PHI), such as the often cited 1993 Harvard Six Cities Study that linked air pollution to premature death. To ignore such studies would contravene the work of Institutional Review Boards across the country which are tasked with both protecting the confidentiality of PHI, reviewing population sampling and protecting the interests of human subjects in research.

One justification often cited for deregulation – and therefore for limiting the use of scientific research in the oversight of commercial industry – is economic. However, economics itself is evolving into a harder science, as exemplified by new applications of artificial intelligence in economic theory and advancements in the field of econometrics. Economics should and will continue to play an important part in applications of regulatory science, but economic interests should not play a role in skewing the foundations of scientific research itself, any more than drivers should select their own speed limits. ■



A citation in the scientific journal, Nature, reported in 2017 that over 50 million scholarly research articles are in existence, with the first having appeared in 1665. When a select group of scientists were asked which articles were “must-read” articles for every ecologist, a list of 544 paper citations was generated.

Forest Stakeholder Groups Collaborate to Influence Local National Forest Management

By John Buckley

MORE THAN A DECADE AGO, the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) was formed as a forest stakeholder collaboration group that focused on the northern ¼ of the Stanislaus National Forest (the Calaveras District) and the southern district of the Eldorado National Forest.

Around the same time, the Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions (YSS) forest stakeholder collaborative group formed to focus on the Miwok and Groveland Districts of the Stanislaus Forest. Since its origin, YSS has expanded its area of interest to include the Summit District which stretches eastward from the MiWok District up to the crest of the Sierra Nevada.

What both of these collaborative groups have in common is that they are made up of loggers, business interests, county supervisors, recreation interests, and environmental group representatives. By meeting monthly or every other month, the two forest stakeholder groups rally around opportunities to acquire grant funds to assist the Forest Service or other forest land owners to do forest restoration or fuel reduction treatments in the local region.

The Tuolumne Group of the Sierra Club has been highly active as a participant in YSS stakeholder discussions since that group first formed. For the Club, Jon Sturtevant spent years engaging in often controversial logging and reforestation discussions, and Kevin Rice and Keith Martin have participated in YSS in

recent years. Due to the involvement of the Sierra Club as well as Audubon, CSERC, and the Tuolumne River Trust, YSS helped to negotiate middle ground solutions that greatly reduced the amount of salvage logging after the Rim Fire and steered that logging toward the least controversial burn sites.

Similarly, because environmental groups have partnered closely with loggers, motorized recreational interests, politicians, etc., the Rim Fire Reforestation Plan ended up with far less herbicide treatments approved than what the USFS originally proposed. By enabling various forest interests to work together with respect, both the YSS and ACCG forest stakeholder groups have gained millions of dollars to help restore meadows, thin over-stocked forest stands, do tree planting in selected sites, and even apply funds to prepare or to implement prescribed burns. By seeking middle ground, the stakeholder groups have brought high value grant funds to the local region – plus the discussions have helped participants learn that even loggers and environmentalists have common areas of overlapping agreement. ■

Tuolumne River Trust Hikes Planned for 2020

By Jenna Levy



Tuolumne River Trust

When you think of a watershed, what comes to mind? Probably rivers, tributaries, snow-packs and run-off. But what about our forests? The Tuolumne River Trust was founded in 1981 to protect and restore the Tuolumne River and as it turns out, our rivers are intimately connected to our forests. After the Rim Fire, our attention turned towards the Stanislaus National Forest and addressing critical needs within the forest which directly impact the health of the watershed. This is often done in partnership with the US Forest Service to complete reforestation projects, forest thinning within plantations and tree planting.

Another facet of our work to support the watershed involves engaging with our local community. We strive to connect locals with the wild places around them and foster a connection with their environment. Starting in January 2020, we'll be hosting a monthly hike in our watershed to offer insight into the dynamics of our forest ecosystem and empower everyone to explore our winter wonderland. For more information about the Tuolumne River Trust and details about upcoming hikes, look for our facebook page (Tuolumne River Trust), visit our website at tuolumne.org, or reach out to Jenna at 303.319.5422. ■



Forest collaborative groups bring together diverse stakeholders in a spirit of respect and cooperation.



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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.

Chair Trudy Craig, broadinski48@yahoo.com

Membership Elaine Hagen, elainehagen@att.net

Treasurer Kevin Rice, kjrice@ucdavis.edu

Outings Keith, Beth Martin, keithwmartin@sbcglobal.net

Chapter Delegate Kevin Rice, kjrice@ucdavis.edu

Webmaster Jim Bearden, jbearden@ieee.org

News Editor Todd Stolp, ststolp@sts-studios.com

Newsletter Design Joe David, jd@daviddesign.com

Secretary & Programs, Open Positions

We welcome your input and feedback.

NOTES & UPDATES

CALENDAR SALES RAISED OVER \$800 FOR OUR GROUP

Thanks to Jennie Moiso and Bob Asquith who helped to raise over \$870 for our group by selling 2020 Sierra Club calendars and cards. There were still a few available for sale at presstime. Call Jennie at 533-9417.

VOTE FOR EX COMM MEMBERS ONLINE

Read candidate bios and vote for Sierra Club Tuolumne Group Executive Committee members at our group website: www.sierratuolumne.org. We are always looking for thoughtful volunteers to join our Executive Committee!

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 Membership Chair, Elaine Hagen at elainehagen@att.net.

RATHER 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.

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.

