



SIERRA CLUB

INSIDE

BENEFITS OF PRESCRIBED BURNS

KEITH MARTIN TO RECEIVE OUTINGS LEADERSHIP AWARD

NAT. GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER PHIL SCHERMEISTER SLATED FOR APRIL 22 PRESENTATION

# The Sequoia



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

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Email Bob Asquith, Outings Leader: [bobasquith@gmail.com](mailto:bobasquith@gmail.com)

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

## Groveland Hiking Group Wants You!

By Outings Leader Bob Asquith

The months ahead will feature weekly hikes throughout Tuolumne County. By March, we will begin chasing wildflowers on nearby Table Mountain and continue all the way up to Tioga Pass in late summer. In 2019, the last Thursday of August greeted us with a phenomenal array of wildflowers at an altitude of over 10,000 feet. It was just turning spring there.

If we ever get some decent snowfall, we will go snowshoeing in Yosemite. And, in the past years, we have joined with other groups to plant trees in Stanislaus National Forest burn areas.

Ahead, some of our outings include the West-side RR Grade, Peoria Mountain (New Melones), the Red Hills, 6 Mile Road (near Murphys) with a stop to enjoy more than 10,000 blooming bulbs at Ironstone Vineyards, Yosemite Valley and Wapama Falls at Hetch Hetchy, the "waterslide" at Tenaya Creek, and many destinations in the Yosemite High Country. PS – A group that hikes together must have ice cream together. *Please come join us.*

Follow us via Facebook at – Hiking The 120. Join us any Thursday at 8am or 9am (until April) in Groveland. Contact our dynamic Outings Leader, Bob Asquith at [bobasquith@gmail.com](mailto:bobasquith@gmail.com)



*"Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt."*

—John Muir





# Prescribed Fire: A Tool for Managing Forests

By John Buckley



**W**hy do environmentalists endorse the use of intentional “prescribed” fire in local forests? Air quality definitely matters to the Sierra Club. Clean air is important – especially for the young, the elderly, and those with health risks. But the reality is that California and most of the West is naturally a fire-based ecosystem with highly flammable vegetation that simply will burn at some point. The only question is “when?” Accordingly, those who live in fire risk communities need to accept the reality that smoke will happen, one way or the other.

At some point, forests, brush fields, and oak woodlands are all likely to burn in a potentially destructive wildfire. Both the Forest Service and the Park Service agree that applying carefully managed prescribed fire is an important tool to reduce the risk of an uncontrolled, high severity wildfire. Some may wonder whether intentionally lighting fires in wildland areas can ever be safe or beneficial. The answer to both questions is “yes.”

Prescribed fires are lit and managed by trained fire crews and only when weather, fuel moisture, and air quality conditions are within a pre-planned “prescription.” The vast, overwhelming majority of prescribed burns lit on public lands have been done safely and effectively, without getting out of control. Crews create strategic fire lines prior to lighting the fire, and

equipment is staged to deal with unexpected events. Additional fire lines are created within the planned burn area so that the prescribed fire can be stopped at those fire lines if conditions change or air quality limits are met. Increasingly, federal forest agencies actually have air quality monitoring equipment on site to ensure that despite the smoke that is generated, no significant health thresholds are exceeded.

For thousands of years lightning and Native American-lit fires kept forests generally open and park-like with scattered patches of forest thickets as well as scattered clearings. The challenge for forest managers today is to replicate natural fires in a safe and effective manner. Our Tuolumne Group consistently supports the use of prescribed fire in our local forests. ■



COURTESY USFS



# Tuolumne Group Outings Chair Honored by Angeles Chapter with Leadership Award

## Local Allies: Central Sierra Audubon Society

**T**HE CHESTER VERSTEEG OUTINGS PLAQUE is the highest outings leadership award conferred by the Angeles Chapter. It is awarded to a Sierra Club member who has provided long-term and outstanding leadership in furthering the enjoyment and safety of the outings program.

Keith Martin has been a leader since 1991. He has an M rating. Keith estimates that he has led nearly 1,000 outings for different Angeles Chapter entities, ranging from local conditioning hikes to multi-week international trips to Mexico and Spain. These outings have included dayhikes; local weekend peak climbs; multi-day Sierra backpacks; bus ski trips to Mammoth; bus lodge and backpacking trips to the Grand Canyon; telemark ski lesson trips with instructors at Big Bear and Mammoth; carcamping in Joshua Tree, Anza Borrego, Pinnacles and Morro Bay; day trips to view petroglyphs in Coso Canyon; hiking and ski/snowshoe cabin trips to Yosemite; assisting with navigation check-off weekends in Joshua Tree; week-long volunteer shifts at LeConte Memorial Lodge in Yosemite; leading Volunteer in Parks projects in Yosemite; and leading Natural Science outings to Yosemite, June Lakes and the White Mountains. Frequently, Keith devoted his time to leading or assisting with conditioning hikes to Henninger Flats and the Arroyo Seco. Many of the trips Keith has led have required imagination and the management of complex logistics, such as his trip to Lassen National Park in 2002, which involved flying from LAX to Sacramento, renting cars and then driving to stay in cabins near the park.

Keith has been active with many chapter entities: NSS (current outings chair), PVS (past chair and outings chair), SMS (past chair and outings chair), SPS (past chair), OCSS (management committee) and WAS (management committee and assistant outings chair). Keith has been active on the chapter Outings Management Committee. He has been the chapter incident investigator for the Safety Committee since 2013. He has been a Navigation Examiner for the Navigation Committee for nearly 20 years.

Since 2010 Keith and his wife Beth have led 16 cabin trips for WAS to Wawona over Martin Luther King Weekend, Presidents Day Weekend and Memorial Day weekend. These trips have netted WAS more than \$8,000. In addition,

Keith and Beth led a successful Thanksgiving weekend bus and lodge trip to the Grand Canyon that netted more than \$1,000.

Keith and Beth moved to the town of Groveland in Tuolumne County, near Yosemite, in 2016. They are active with the Tuolumne Group; Keith is the group's Outings Chair and is the Group Representative to Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions, a forest management advisory panel to the Forest Service.



*Keith Martin on the trail.*

Keith received an Angeles Chapter Outings Service Award in 1999 and a Special Service Award in 2004. The Palos Verdes South Bay Group was also awarded a Special Service Award in 2004, while Keith was Group Chair.

Keith is a licensed professional civil and structural engineer. He is an Air Force Vietnam era Veteran, serving as an officer and a pilot. Keith was a Structural Specialist with the LA County Fire Department's Urban Search and Rescue team, CATF2, and responded with the team to Hurricane Iniki in Hawaii, the Northridge Earthquake, the Oklahoma Federal Building bombing, Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in Houston, and the Port au Prince, Haiti Earthquake.

We congratulate Keith for this much deserved award and for his many years of outings leadership and service! ■



**T**he Central Sierra Audubon Society, which includes both Tuolumne and Calaveras counties, supports the mission of the National Audubon Society: to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biodiversity.

To promote the conservation of wildlife and the preservation of the natural environment, Central Sierra Audubon sponsors a series of regular informative public programs and guided field trips throughout the region.

Recent trips included birding outings to Salt Springs Valley near Copperopolis and on the grounds of Indigene Reserve near Sonora. Scheduled public meetings and speaker presentations are held in both Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties.

One of the Society's stated goals is to empower members and the public with the knowledge to be effective environmental advocates in order to bring about a "Culture of Conservation".

For more detailed information on upcoming outings and public meetings, visit their website at [centralsierraaudubon.org](http://centralsierraaudubon.org) ■



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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.

**Chair** Elaine Hagen, [elainehagen@att.net](mailto:elainehagen@att.net)

**Secretary**

Karen Swanson, [tuolumnegroupsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:tuolumnegroupsecretary@gmail.com)

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

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**Political Chair** Kara Bechtel, [campaignerkara@gmail.com](mailto:campaignerkara@gmail.com)

**News Editor** Joe David, [jd@daviddesign.com](mailto:jd@daviddesign.com)

**We welcome your input and feedback.**

## NOTES & UPDATES

### SAVE THE DATE APRIL 22 • EARTH DAY W/ PHIL SCHERMEISTER

Join us at the Sonora Public Library on April 22nd at 7pm for a slideshow presentation by acclaimed photographer Phil Schermeister. Phil will share the stories behind the images he has shot for National Geographic and others. Not to be missed! *More info next newsletter.*

### 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).

### 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](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).

