



The Sequoia

Sierra Club Tuolumne Group Hosts National Geographic Photographer, Phil Schermeister March 27

INSIDE

CONCERNS PERSIST AS STANISLAUS REQUESTS PUBLIC INPUT ON SERAL 2.0

THE CHALLENGE OF PROTECTING WILDLIFE

JOIN US at 7:00pm, Wednesday, March 27th at the Sonora Library for a slideshow presentation by acclaimed *National Geographic* photographer Phil Schermeister as he shares a selection of images from his photo assignments and personal travels.

During the past 25 years, Phil Schermeister has completed more than 40 major assignments for the National Geographic Book Division, National Geographic Magazine and other National Geographic publications. He has photographed on assignment more than 40 National Parks around the United States and has published six single-photographer books with National Geographic, including *Range of Light*, *Our National Parks*, and *America's Western Edge*. Phil has photographed in dozens of countries on four continents including Antarctica, Greenland, the Canadian High Arctic, Alaska and many of Baja's isolated wilderness islands.



Phil Schermeister



Photos by Phil Schermeister

Space is limited. Come early for best seating. **Doors open at 6:30pm 7pm Wednesday, March 27th at the Sonora Library, 480 Greenley Rd.**



UPDATE

Huge Forest Project Still Proposes Herbicides and Logging Big Trees

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ENDS APRIL 1



An herbicide-treated area in the forest.



LAST FALL the Stanislaus National Forest publicly released its plan for the massive new SERAL 2.0 “large landscape” project. While some parts of the giant 119,000-acre project are mostly positive, two proposed treatments in particular are highly controversial.

The plan proposes to allow the spraying of herbicides to kill unwanted vegetation on fuel breaks; the plan would also allow the logging of very large trees up to 40” in diameter at meadows, near aspen stands, and near rust-resistant sugar pine trees. One herbicide formulation (glyphosate) that could be used has been listed as possibly causing cancer by the World Health Organization.

During the public comment period, our Tuolumne Group of the Sierra Club provided a comment letter opposing the herbicide spraying and the cutting of big trees.

In February, after the initial public comments, the Forest Service released its revised proposed action for the SERAL 2.0 project. The agency continues to plan to log very large trees for the three categories of reasons previously identified; and the agency still plans to allow thousands of acres of herbicide treatments on fuel breaks. The Forest Service’s “response to comments” shows that out of 13,800 acres of planned fuel breaks, the revised plan would now allow herbicide spraying on “up to 7,500 acres”. While less than previously, that’s still nearly 12 square miles of public forest that could have chemical treatments when prescribed burning, mastication, or other treatments are alternatives that can be used for managing vegetation.

Because the Forest Service recognizes that herbicide spraying is highly controversial, the Forest staff has decided to separate out the proposed herbicide treatments from decision-making for the other forest treatments that are being rushed through a speeded-up “emergency” planning process. *The decision on whether or not to allow herbicides will now be put off until the end of summer or early fall. But comments submitted now can help influence that decision.*

PUBLIC COMMENTS CAN HELP SHAPE THE FINAL PLAN

Written comments in response to the proposed herbicide spraying (and other issues such as the logging of large trees) can be submitted any time before April 1st. Written comments can be mailed to: Stanislaus National Forest, Attn: SERAL 2.0, 19777 Greenley Road, Sonora, CA 95370

For those preferring to comment online, we have added links to the SERAL 2.0 project page & comments pages on our Sierra Club Tuolumne Group home page: www.sierratuolumne.org.

*Find links to the
SERAL 2 Project Page
and Comments Page
on our local Tuolumne
Group Website:*

www.sierratuolumne.org

ADD YOUR COMMENTS

Agencies Consider Options for Dealing with “Problem” Wildlife

Sierra Club members may not know that taxpayers’ dollars pay for the killing of “problem” wildlife in the state. A federal agency called Wildlife Services-California uses a variety of methods to deal with predators that may affect livestock or other commercial operations on private lands. Those methods include shooting, trapping, and poisons.

Early this year that federal agency and state agriculture officials released an environmental assessment of the “wildlife damage management” (WDM) program with various alternatives. The proposed action would continue to allow “status quo” lethal methods. In contrast, Alternative 2 would restrict the use of lethal methods to only be used on wildlife threatening safety at airports (primarily bird collisions), or the safety of people and pets, or when a predator is harming endangered species.

Once the State Department of Food and Agriculture and Wildlife Services-CA finish their review of all the input, a decision for predator control and other wildlife management actions will be finalized. In the past, killing wolves, bobcats, coyotes, and many other kinds of wildlife was broadly accepted by the public. Today, the Sierra Club and the public in general oppose spending taxpayers’ dollars to kill predators to benefit ranchers or other private interests.



Foothill Wildflower Displays are Beginning to Unfold!

From Table Mountain to the Red Hills to the region’s deep river canyons, the wildflower displays of the spring season can truly dazzle those who take the time to walk amidst all the beauty. Cool temperatures and lots of rain events have delayed some of the earliest displays, but colorful wildflowers are visible in many locations across the foothills.

Walk carefully to minimize your disturbance. Savor the smells and the scenes. **Enjoy spring!**



Kendra Coulter’s New Book “Defending Animals” Shows How Difficult It Can Be to Protect Them

After seeing a fox family’s burrow get demolished for a housing development, I felt the urge to act. I called a local animal rescue organization, but it couldn’t help unless the skulk of foxes posed a danger to humans. Absent risk to people, the foxes were on their own.

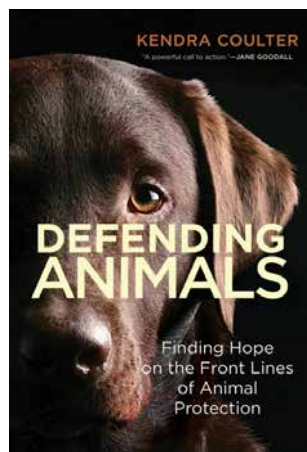
There is a labyrinth of organizations that help animals in need, and it is not easy to navigate. In Kendra Coulter’s book, *Defending Animals: Finding Hope on the Front Lines of Animal Protection* (MIT Press, 2023), she profiles an array of groups and individuals to illustrate just how difficult protecting animals, both domesticated and wild, can be. “When animals are being abused or in danger, who will help? What will help involve? Could harm be prevented? These questions propel this book,” Coulter writes. “People are the problem, and the solutions.”

Coulter’s mix of positive stories and disturbing details of abuse makes the book an emotional roller coaster to read. Dark stories abound, of

owners shooting dogs, tractors dragging cows, and a raccoon left to die after it was hit by a car. But solutions come into view when Coulter highlights tales of rescue, renewal, and rehabilitation—and pivots to what often does work to save animals, such as cruelty investigators and preventative programs like one that connects the unhoused with veterinary care. She calls for more public investment in those resources.

Coulter concludes, “Something as significant as animal protection should not be so dependent on donations. The public sector should spend more money protecting animals.

Public leadership should aim higher . . . and support humane job creation and transitions across sectors, including in animal care and food production.” More than a mere survey of problems and solutions, this book is a narrative portrait of the animal caregivers on the front lines, showcasing their often difficult task of protecting the defenseless.





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Due to COVID-19, the Tuolumne Group Executive Committee is currently only meeting by phone or with online sessions. For information on how to participate in the next ExCom meeting, contact Elaine Hagen at the email listed below.

Chair Jim Bearden, jbearden@ieee.org

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We welcome your input and feedback.

NOTES & UPDATES

CONNECT WITH YOUR SIERRA CLUB TUOLUMNE GROUP

Want to put your support for the environment into action?

Consider joining our Executive Committee. **Have a great idea for a local Sierra Club presentation?** There are many ways to volunteer with our group. Interested members are invited to attend one of our ExCom meetings.

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

PHOTOGRAPHER PHIL SCHERMEISTER MAR. 27

Tuolumne Sierra Club will host National Geographic photographer Phil Schermeister for a slideshow presentation of his work Wednesday evening, March 27th at 7pm at the Sonora Library, 480 Greenley Rd. FREE - Come early for best seats!

RATHER RECEIVE THIS 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.

