



THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER FROM CLAIR TAPPAAN LODGE (CTL)

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Exciting news! Beginning August 1, Clair Tappaan will have a new management firm. Read all about The California Parks Company on page 3.

Our Environmental Education fundraiser was a great success, with hikes, speakers, swimming, art, prizes, and music – see highlights on pages 4 - 6.

To see what the Environmental Education program does, and how your contribution helps, see pages 7 and 8.

SAVE THE DATE FOR NEXT YEAR'S
FUNDRAISER - AUGUST 2 - 4, 2019

Meet Suzanne Valencia from Florida who has a trail behind the Lodge named after her – page 9.

Meet our new CTL Committee member from Houston, Erik Fowler – page 10.

Learn about new improvements at Hutchinson Lodge, page 10.

What's happening at the Lodge in August and September? – read on...

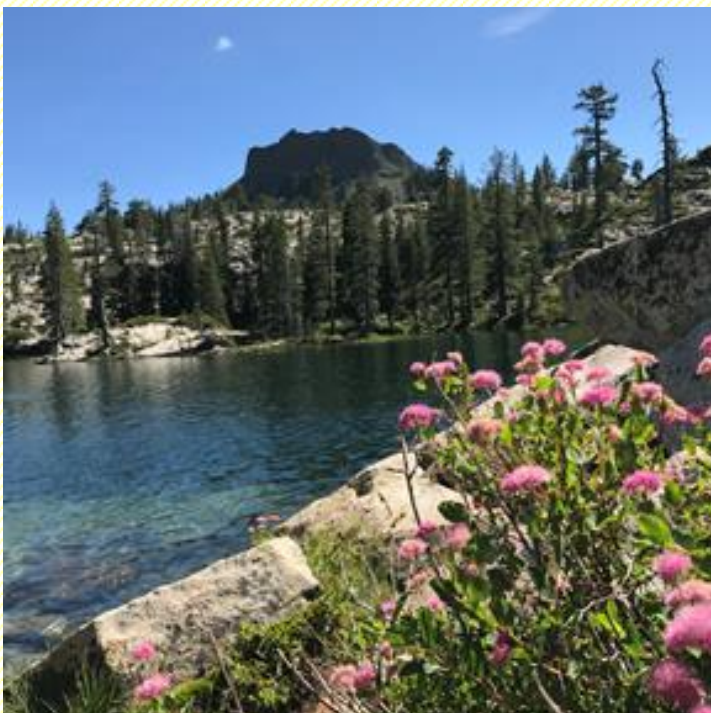
SUMMER EVENTS

August 5 - 11, 2018 - [Hiking and Music in Tahoe National Forest](#)

August 19 - 25, 2018 - [Introduction to Backpacking in the High Sierra](#)

August 20 - 26, 2018 - [Service and Stewardship with the Truckee Donner Land Trust](#)

September 23 - 29, 2018 - [Service and the Arts: A Creative Week at Clair Tappaan Lodge](#)



Long Lake (foreground), Devils Peak (background)

FALL IN THE SIERRA

Fall is the hidden season at CTL. The crowds have gone home and the weather is usually great. There are several fun, artistic, educational events going on in September.

September 8 – 9 – Art Hikes at Donner Summit

<http://www.trailsandvistas.org/trails-vistas-art-hikes.html>

Create a summit experience with a combo art hike ticket and stay at Clair Tappaan Lodge. Create community: Eat, Stay, Explore, Enjoy. Our very own volunteer hike leader Rick Ramos, and Lodge Manager Peter Lehmkuhl will be leading hikes!

Art Hike Sierra Club Guide Tours at 9:45 a.m. and 11:45 a.m. Call to make your reservations –530-426-3632.

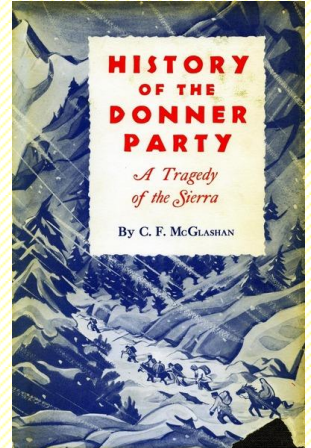


Don't forget to enjoy a great Thanksgiving dinner at the Lodge on November 22

September 15 - 16. Annual Donner Party Hike

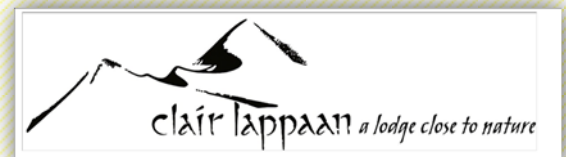
<http://donnerpartyhike.com/saturday-hikes/>

There will be seven different hikes on Saturday, each led by a leader armed with historical photographs and knowledge. There will be music during lunch at the Judah Lodge at Sugar Bowl followed by an afternoon presentation on the Lincoln Highway by Jim Bonar. In the evening at the Donner Memorial Visitor Center, Heidi Sproat and Barbara Czerwinski of the Truckee Donner Historical Society will speak on C.F. McGlashan and the coming of winter sports to Truckee. On Sunday there will be a walk around Donner Party sites at the State Park and Alder Creek or a bus tour of Donner Summit.



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CTL UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

By Wally Juchert



In 2003, the Sierra Club contracted with a property management company to provide marketing and oversight for Sierra Club properties at Donner Summit. CTL Committee members have long felt that the management firm was not very proactive in their support of the Lodge, so they sought possible alternatives. They discovered The California Parks Company.

With a mission statement “to be the world’s greatest manager and steward of recreation, retail, hospitality and event services,” and a vision statement “to provide GREAT experiences in the GREAT outdoors,” they are a perfect fit for CTL. As further evidence, they believe in community service by helping numerous organizations, like the Great Sierra River Cleanup, reach their missions (<http://www.calparksco.com/agency-partners/community-service/>).

In April 2017, the Lodge Committee wrote to John Koeberer, President and CEO of The California Parks Company (and a recent inductee into the California Outdoors Hall of Fame), presenting the history of the Sierra Club at Donner Summit and requesting their consideration to manage the Lodge, including marketing, technical support, personnel, activities, and accounting.

In July 2017, John Koeberer and Michael Han (California Parks Vice President, Northern Region) met with CTL Committee members at Clair Tappaan and Hutchinson Lodges. They spent six hours exploring every nook and cranny and asking all the right questions. Both John and Mike expressed their interest in providing management services for CTL.

In August 2017, two members of the CTL Committee visited Drakesbad Guest Ranch in Lassen Volcanic National Park where the California Parks

Company has been providing management services since 1974. Guests are housed in a variety of historic cabins, receive meals in a central dining hall, and have access to horse outings and swimming in a geothermal-heated pool. The staff were friendly and well organized. The occupancy ratio at Drakesbad is 99%!

Committee members met with Larry Foster, General Services Manager of the Sierra Club, to discuss the possibility of a management transition. The Committee members recommended The California Parks Company and, after successful negotiations, the Sierra Club moved forward with a new contract.

On August 1, 2018, The California Parks Company became the management firm of the Sierra Club properties at Donner Summit. Mike Han will be the primary contact. He currently oversees several properties in Lassen and Shasta Counties as well as Oregon.

Mike and his wife Christina were at the Lodge this July to experience our Environmental Education Fundraiser. We appreciate his interest and participation, and look forward to working with him to increase the capacity and improve the condition of the Lodge.



Welcome aboard Mike!

CONTACT THE LODGE FOR RESERVATIONS
530-426-3632
or email
reservations@clairtappaanlodge.com



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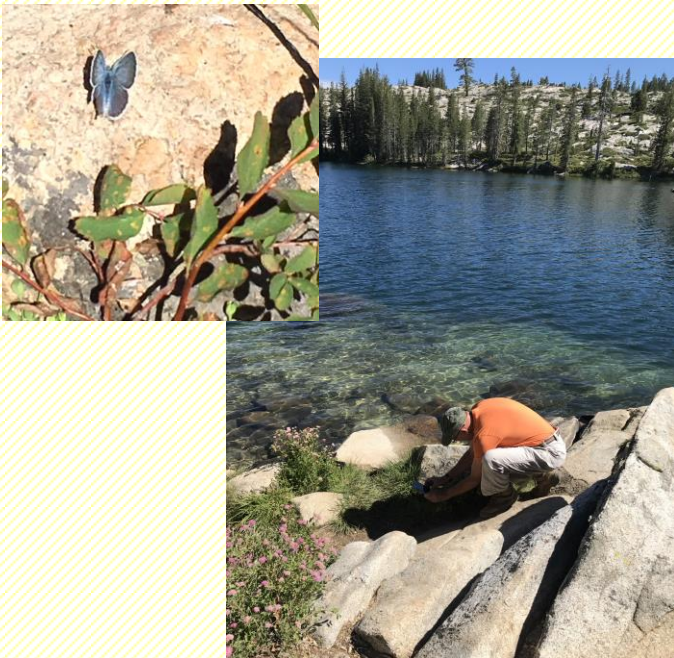
HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS YEAR'S FUNDRAISER



A hike to Flora Lake, and a swim.

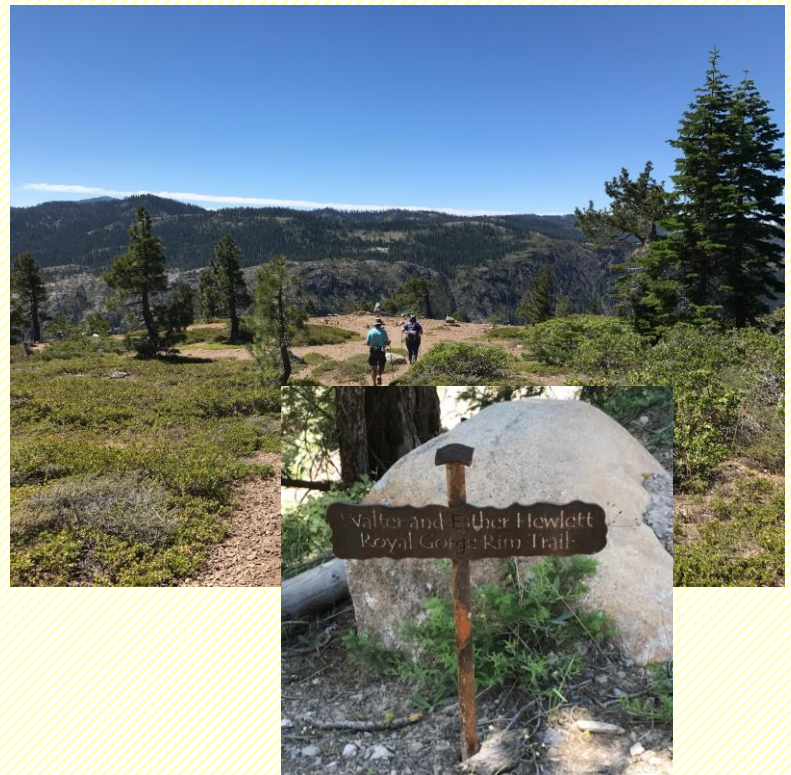
Our wonderful hike leader Rick Ramos organized all the hikes and prepared maps and a picture montage for each of his hikes:

<https://www.gaiagps.com/public/7DkurjiXJb9HI5ehz3584k2A>



Here's Rick taking a butterfly photograph at Long Lake.

Ah, the Views!



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SPEAKERS

Milton Hildebrand, celebrating his 100th birthday this year, entertained a packed living room with his stories and memories. A thank-you to his sons Ross and Kern who brought him to CTL for the day and shared their memories as well—such as the seal skin unique to Hildebrand skis, brought over from Europe by their grandfather.

Milton talked about skiing at Sugarbowl on a holiday weekend when they were the only ones there! He remembered a “restaurant” in one of the snow sheds between CTL and Sugarbowl. It had no roads to it and no parking. Its only business came from the numerous, long freight trains (60-70 cars) that chugged up the hill, stopping at the shed so the lead engineer and fireman could get a steak, omelets, and pancakes.

In 1934, when Milton was 16, he came to CTL from Berkeley on 12 consecutive weekends to help build the Lodge. He was driven there by Lewis Clark, a long-time, devoted Sierra Club leader who the CTL living room is named after. The A-frame in the living room was made from thick tree trunks taken from the hill above CTL using a tripod and block and tackle, pulled by a 1934 truck.



Peter Mayfield gave an inspiring talk on environmental education. Through his company, Gateway Mountain Center, he has designed and delivered creative and successful outdoor educational programs for thousands of California youth, often based at Clair Tappaan. Peter presented a new video,



done as a college media project by a student from Sierra Nevada College: <https://rhgause.myportfolio.com/social-network-scene-mp4>. It features one of the larger trips sponsored by the Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee, the Fremont School of East Oakland. Gateway’s motto is “Helping Youth Learn, Heal and Thrive!”

MUSIC

The Zen Mountain Poets were enchanting! They came all the way from San Luis Obispo to entertain us with their original music. The band includes Billy Clayton (vocals, rhythm guitar), Robyn Saxer (vocals, keyboards, ukulele, French horn, accordion), Anthony Roselli (drums), and Chad Hoffman (bass). A particular favorite of the audience was *Wendy’s Song*, written by Billy for his granddaughter. Hear this and more at <http://zenmountainpoets.com/music/>.



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A special thank-you to CTL Committee member Leslie Ewing who covered the costs of the band's visit!

RAFFLE

We made \$250 from our raffle. For a mere \$5, Sara Pender won a pair of Lowe boots! Barbara Nebeker (below right) won an award-winning drawing. Other prizes included a free night stay for two at the Lodge, two bags of coffee, and free ski lift tickets.



ART

The art auction made \$425. A big thank-you to all the artists who contributed (including Diane Boyer, above left, and Barbara), and a very special thanks



The raffle, art auction, and additional donations from guests raised \$13,260! Thanks to all who contributed.

Contributions can still be made for environmental education by mailing a non-tax deductible donation made out to Clair Tappaan Lodge (note Env. Ed. on subject line). If you want a tax deduction (which includes an administrative fee), make your check payable to Sierra Club Foundation/CTL. Mail your check to PO Box 36, Norden, CA 95724.

Your donation helps to cover room and board at the Lodge for the students; a class of 20 for two days is \$2,200.



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SCIENCE AT CLAIR TAPPAAN LODGE

By Spencer Eusden, Program Director
Headwaters Science Institute

In late May, two different Sacramento schools traveled to Donner Summit for science programs in the Sierra. Both of these trips would not have been possible without lodging scholarships from the Sierra Club CTL fund. During their trip, groups explored the waterways and forests surrounding the Lodge to learn first-hand about ecology in the Sierra. Led by instructors from Headwaters Science Institute, groups of students worked together to ask original scientific questions, design experiments to test their questions, collect data, and present their findings. Here are a few highlights of each program.

SYLVAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Students from the Sylvan Middle School of Sacramento came to Clair Tappaan to study population and resource dynamics in Sierra forests. Their research included a study of how tree habitat affects symbiotic lichen abundance. Other groups investigated several mountain streams and the habitats that best supported aquatic insects known to be



MET SACRAMENTO HIGH SCHOOL

The group from the Met Sacramento High School compared the streams around the Lodge with the nearby Van Norden Meadow wetland below the Lodge, to learn more about watershed ecology. While the groups did not see much difference between the two sites in soil or water pH, they did find significantly higher insect biodiversity in the meadow sites. Insect population size and biodiversity positively correlated with soil moisture and temperature. The students were excited to apply the research techniques they had learned to the



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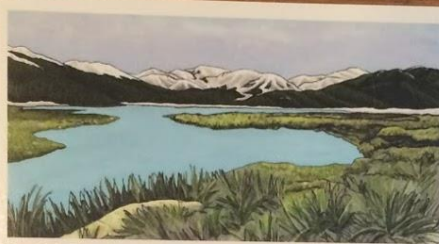
waterways near their school in Sacramento. Each group created a PowerPoint presentation of their work to share their findings on watershed ecology with their peers who weren't able to make the trip.

The lead teacher from Sylvan Middle School shared that "Being in the Sierra Nevada Mountains was a new experience for most of our students." and that their trip "would not have been possible without funding from Headwaters and the Sierra Club CTL fund. I believe our kids learned a lot from the trip and it will be a great memory for our kids."



This trip is a formative and great part of education, and something that has been so much fun, and for this, I thank the Sierra Club for making this possible - Cameron D.

Thank you so much for supporting this program. It was such a wonderful experience being able to conduct my own research and experiment.
-Emily



HEADWATERS
SCIENCE INSTITUTE

This trip was amazing! This wouldn't have happened without you guys! I had tons of fun learning about certain types of plants, animals, etc.
Again.

Thank You!

SierraFoundation,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to explore the wilderness a lot more than the average person and opening our minds to new potential career choices! -Evelin Pelayo



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A LONG-TIME VISITOR AND VOLUNTEER FROM FLORIDA

By Pat Mikkelsen, with Suzanne Valencia

Suzanne Valencia and her daughter Camilla honored us with their presence at our 2018 fundraiser for Environmental Education. They came all the way from Florida. Suzanne is an 84-year-old, retired registered nurse who has a trail at CTL named after her. She graduated as a nurse from St. Mary's School, Rochester, in 1955, specializing in orthopedics and intensive care. Later, she worked in home health as a visiting nurse. In 1988, she went back to school at the University of Central Florida to obtain a BA in Nursing. Besides her four daughters, Cynthia, Ann, Suzanne (Jr), and Camilla, she has a number of "adopted" daughters, friends of her daughters who have no mothers nearby.

She first came to the Lodge in 2000 as part of a fundraiser for the Sierra Club Manatee-Sarasota Group of the Florida Chapter. She met Herb Holden, then Manager of CTL. The first hike Herb led the group on was up a sheer rock face. His instructions were "keep moving and don't look down!"

Suzanne came to CTL again in 2001 and 2002 with the Turtle Coast Group of the Florida Chapter, with Herb again leading the hikes. At that time Herb asked Suzanne if she would organize a national trip to help restore the health of 50 acres surrounding the Lodge. The first trip was in 2003. The group helped plant a hillside with pine, removed slash, and chopped down trees. The service trips (called "volunteer vacations" by Sierra Club) continued every year, gradually including teens. Suzanne began adding multigenerational "fun" trips, ages six years to parents and grandparents, as well as hiking trips with adults.

In 2009, she volunteered for Inspiring Connections Outdoors which "spreads the joy of wilderness by providing safe and fun wilderness trips for people with limited access to the outdoors" (<https://content.sierraclub.org/outings/ico>). It included a diverse group of nine teens and nine adults, including three Ethiopian siblings from Kentucky, a Chinese-American, and a Japanese-American. Peter Lehmkuhl was Lodge Manager at the time and assigned the group to build a spur off the nature trail behind the Lodge. This led to a vista point of the meadow below the lodge. Peter told the group they could name the trail and they chose "Valencia Vista Trail." Suzanne led 60 national Sierra Club trips all over the country as her second career.

We very much appreciate Suzanne's support of and impact on the Lodge over the years.



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A NEW CTL COMMITTEE MEMBER

By Erik Fowler

I have been a member of the Sierra Club for 18 years and have been visiting the Lodge regularly since 2007. I am currently an Advanced Placement Environmental Science teacher for a public charter school in Houston. Before deciding to teach, I worked in the private and nonprofit sectors for 20 years, and more recently on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects around the country. I completed my undergraduate degree at UC Berkeley and my Master's Degree at Duke University.



I'm a huge fan of the Lodge. I remember the first time I visited, it reminded me of summer camp when I was a kid in the Texas hill country. Plenty of quiet time, outdoor things to do, fresh mountain air, and three meals! I think

the Lodge also represents for me an important piece of an ethos at risk in modern America—one that values simplicity, service, environmental stewardship and low-tech outdoor fun.

In a small but important way, the Lodge has also been the place that inspired me to take my commitment to environmental education to the next level. I recently chose to work with urban kids at a school committed to educational equity in low-income neighborhoods. I teach the same course they would get in a first- or second-year college environmental science and policy class. For my CTL Committee support, perhaps there may be an opportunity for me to help expand our outreach and Lodge opportunities for students and schools.

WHAT'S NEW AT HUTCHINSON?

Built in 1924 as a winter retreat for lovers of the Sierra Nevada, Hutchinson Lodge, originally named the Sierra Ski Club, is a rustic, un-staffed cabin situated in the woods just west of CTL. Miles of hiking and cross-country ski trails are right outside the door. Sleeps 25.

Both upper lofts now feature bunk beds.



A deck is nearing completion.



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