



THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER FROM CLAIR TAPPAAN LODGE (CTL)

CTL COMMITTEE UPDATE

By Wally Juchert, Chair - Advisory Council, Sierra Club at Donner Summit

Who's behind that mask? Greetings to all of you who care for others and believe in science.

All of our facilities at Donner Summit have been closed and will be through at least August 2020. A small staff is cleaning, painting, and planning changes that will be necessary to protect guests' health when opening is allowed.

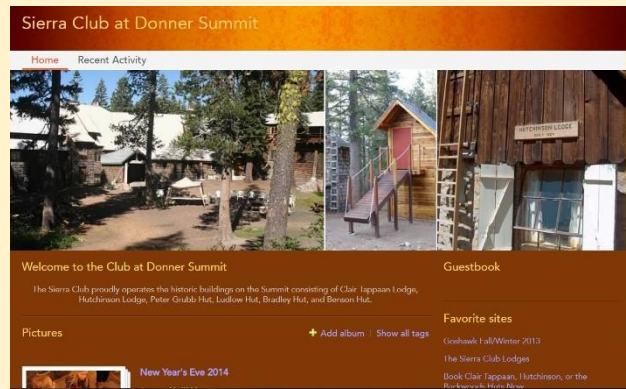
There will not be an environmental education fundraiser at Clair Tappaan Lodge in 2020.

We have reserved CTL for a fundraiser July 16 - 18, 2021, hoping that there will be some treatment that mitigates COVID-19. This pandemic has made clear the prejudices and practices we have in the United States. Black Lives do matter. Poverty, disparity in wealth distribution, lack of health care, telling the truth, empathy, the rule of law....there is so much work to be done.

We look forward to when we can meet in person again. In the meantime be well.

RICH JOHNS' PHOTO ARCHIVE

Since we won't be able to get together this year for the fundraiser, you can relive our past events by logging on to [Sierra Club at Donner Summit](#). The web page was created by Rich Johns, who did so much for the lodge,



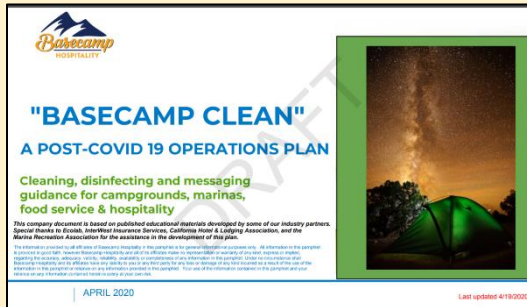
as well as taking photos at all events and posting pictures from fundraisers from 2009 to 2013 until his untimely death (check out the [In Memoriam](#) Goshawk about Rich). If you attended our big 75th anniversary celebration in 2009, you are likely to find your picture —dancing, eating, talking, painting, fly fishing, drinking, or listening to talks and music.

SAVE THE DATE
JULY 16 - 18, 2021
CTL ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION FUNDRAISER



COVID-19 PREVENTION PLAN FOR REOPENING

The Executive Committee of the Sierra Club's Board of Directors makes decisions for all their entities, including CTL. As directed, Lodge Manager Alice Harten prepared a COVID-19 Prevention Plan for Reopening Operations for Clair Tappaan and Hutchinson Lodges and Forest Service Huts Benson, Bradley, Ludlow, and Peter Grubb following California, County, and Basecamp Management guidelines.



CDPH /CAL OSHA - June 5, 2020
 COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE
 Hotels, Lodging, and Short-Term Rentals
 Restaurants, Bars, and Wineries

Some major directives include:

- Reducing the number of people in communal spaces (e.g., living room and library);
- Reducing overall lodge capacity—from 143 to 75-80 people;
- Regular schedule of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting;
- Providing sanitizing stations;
- Touchless paper towel and soap dispensers;
- Six-foot separation floor stickers;
- Plexiglass barriers.

All efforts are being made to maintain the character of the lodge while following the various guidelines. For now, the Sierra Club is supporting upkeep, improvements, and personnel.

Alice Harten and Art Birch (maintenance) are working full-time. Lodge Assistant Kyle Johnson started in February. Paul Buelna is a part-time contractor helping with special projects. Marc Woods will return to the phones when we open again. Alice will need one month's notice prior to opening to hire additional staff. It's looking unlikely for September.

CHANGES

Cubicle Area—smoothed out and painted walls and floor, removed nails/hooks, painted hallway.

Men's Dorm—removed bunk beds, painted and repaired walls. Will be made into a suite with a bed and private deck and possibly a private bath.

Ski patrol room—between men's dorm and bathroom will become the main office to allow for meetings with employees and guests.

Redid both bathrooms—cleaned and painted walls, repaired around showers.

Rental shop—totally reorganized, built more ski holders, discarded unusable stuff. Guests will be able to request equipment online and it will be waiting in their room.

Women's dorm bathroom—repaired as needed.

Got rid of old, dented lockers in basement.

Library—temporarily removed games, puzzles, and books.

Sanitizer stations ordered. There will be hand washing stations available throughout.

Replaced half the mattresses last year. The rest are ordered and expected soon.

Rebuilt dining room deck and library stairway.

Liquor license received.

Hutchinson Lodge was already renting out as an AIRBNB. There was a lot of interest in it.



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CLAIR TAPPAAN LODGE—OUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME

By Jane Risk, Co-chair of the CTL Committee for Environmental Education Grant Funding

Jane and Jerry Risk have been involved with the lodge for over 30 years. Here Jane shares some of her memories of that time.

I taught elementary and middle school for more than 30 years in San Francisco public schools. It was in the 1980s, when I was teaching sixth and seventh graders at San Francisco Community School, that I first started taking my class to Clair Tappaan Lodge. Outdoor education was an integral part of our school's curriculum and the "Snow Trip" soon became a highlight of the school year. Most of the students had never seen snow before and staying at the lodge was a wonderful experience for them. It was just my class at first but we soon expanded to include all of the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders in the school, about 80 or 90 students in all.

Preparing for the Snow Trip was a challenge. We wanted to make sure that every student could go, so fundraising was essential. We had bake sales, garage sales, and auctions. The most expensive part of taking students to the lodge in those days was chartering the bus. We also rented cold weather clothing for the students because none of them had snow clothes or boots. We would take them to G&M Sales where they would be outfitted from head to toe with whatever they needed to stay warm. That was an adventure in itself.

On our way to the lodge, the bus driver would stop at the Gold Run Rest Area and all of us would pile into the restrooms to change into our snow clothes. The first sighting of snow was always exciting. When we finally arrived, we would form a long line, stretching

from the highway up the very steep path to the back door. The students passed all their bags from hand to hand—teamwork! We would go mid-week when there were plenty of rooms available. The staff members were always so welcoming.

The lodge is a perfect place for kids. It is built like a maze and wherever you go there is something interesting and unusual. Right outside is a hill—the beginning of the trail to Lake Flora—and the students loved to go down that slope on snow saucers and sleds. Those who were more adventurous even tried putting on skis.

Staying at the lodge was a powerful experience for the students. They were away from their families. They slept in dorms, curled up in sleeping bags on three-tier bunk beds. Everyone had to help with chores. They also had to figure out how to entertain themselves in the evening. I remember some delightful original skits! There was a real feeling of friendship and camaraderie. I learned to value each of my students on those trips; every one of them had something special to contribute. When they went back to school, they had a more positive perspective. The Snow Trip was a challenge from beginning to end and it was fun from beginning to end.

My husband Jerry Risk, who also taught in the San Francisco school system, became very involved with the lodge as well. We used to go as a family, first with



*Jerry Risk,
by Joan
Meador*



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our children, and eventually with our grandchildren. We loved the warm, welcoming feeling of the lodge, the comfortable living room and library, the family-style meals, and the interesting people we met there, people who shared our love of hiking in the Sierras and swimming in clear cold mountain lakes. Clair Tappaan Lodge became our “home away from home.”



Jane Risk surrounded by her family

There was a cohort of people who enjoyed fixing things for the lodge and Jerry was one of them. He loved it when there was something that needed repair. When Wally Juchert and Diane Boyer—Wally is now Chair of the lodge Committee and Diane a former Chair—got involved with restoring Hutchinson Lodge, Jerry worked with them for a while on that project. Rich Johns was another Lodge Committee member who loved to fix things and sometimes Jerry would help him, too. One year, Jerry and our son Gabriel built a small pool table by hand and donated it to the lodge. It was a great hit and got so much use that eventually it wasn't usable anymore.

In 2006, we found out that the Sierra Club Board was thinking of selling Clair Tappaan Lodge. We felt strongly that this would be a huge mistake. We had seen firsthand what a difference the lodge could

make, especially for young people. The Sierra Club's stated mission is to “explore, enjoy, and protect the planet,” and we knew that Clair Tappaan Lodge plays an important part in fulfilling that mission. The lodge offered opportunities to people who might otherwise not be able to go into the mountains—such as the students in my school. So Jerry and I joined the Lodge Committee where we focused on increasing the number of educational and youth programs at the lodge. We wrote letters, went to meetings, encouraged more schools to bring their students to the lodge for outdoor education, and worked on increasing programming for the lodge in the summer months. We even printed a CTL Summer Brochure that we distributed at the annual San Francisco Summer Resource Fair.



Jerry and granddaughter Lucy, 2006

I arranged for Peter Mayfield, Director of the Truckee non-profit Gateway Mountain Center, to visit interested schools in the Bay Area. He would give presentations on the activities and course work that he could offer via the new Clair Tappaan Lodge education program.

We requested special funding from the Sierra Club Foundation to defray part of the transportation and educational program costs for schools that wanted to participate. In all of this we were fortunate to have support and help from the Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee and its dedicated and skilled chairperson Ernie Malamud.

In 2007, I worked together with Andrea Brewer-Thompson, a volunteer, and Dave Simon, Sierra Club Director of Outdoor Activities, to expand the



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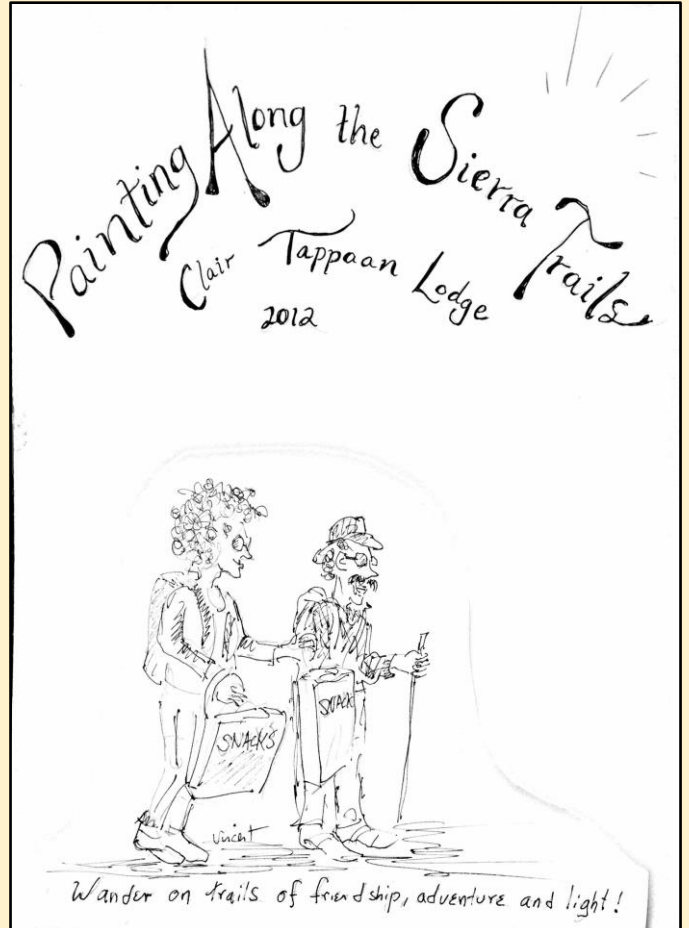


educational program beyond schools. We established a connection with the Elderhostel/Road Scholar program called “Treks and Trails, Tunes and Tales of the High Sierra.” This was led by Elderhostel coordinator Pat Northrop and featured musician/storyteller Kevin Carr. We launched a similar program called “Make the Mountains Glad,” also led by Pat Northrop, in 2008. That program continued until 2016.

When Jerry and I retired from teaching in the early 2000s, we decided we wanted to lead some Sierra Club outings from the Lodge. But first we had to train as outings leaders. We attended a fabulous outing in Montana that followed portions of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Linda Conklin, leader of that outing, gave us many pointers about how to plan our own outings.

From 2008 to 2011 we led a “Just for Grandparents & Grandkids” outing. We even took two of our grandchildren on that one. We went to a different place every day, I took the front of the line to show the way, and Jerry always took the back, to make sure that we didn’t lose anybody.

From 2008 to 2012 Jerry and I also led “Painting Along the Sierra Trails” outings. Since Jerry is an artist, he especially loved this trip. So did all the participants; many returned year after year. Our main role was to carry the snacks! Jerry and I would buy all the dried fruit and nuts beforehand and divide it up into bags for each day.



Jerry and Jane Risk, by Charles Vincent

Detailed information on the Foundation, the program, and our educational partners can be found in the

[Environmental Education Resource Guide](#)

which includes a funding request form.

Get all set up to visit the lodge when environmental education starts again in 2021!



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THE COMFORT LODGE

During the 2019 CTL fundraiser, Editor Pat Mikkelsen and lodge guest Mira Sharan sat down with Bill Frey, who has been coming to the lodge since 1957, to talk about his family and his memories of the lodge.

THE FREY FAMILY

When Bill Frey was six months old, his mom and dad took him to Clair Tappaan Lodge for the first time. He has been coming here ever since, along with five generations of his family. Bill's dad, George Frey, was the first to visit the lodge with his friend Mel, a Sierra Club member. George first worked on the little dam near Hutchinson that supplied water to Clair Tappaan Lodge, then came to the lodge to go skiing with Mel, taking the train from San Francisco to the shed in Norden. Bill's dad George then became the main reason anyone in the family came to the lodge, including Bill's grandfather Sharkey.

George was a very personable traveling salesman.

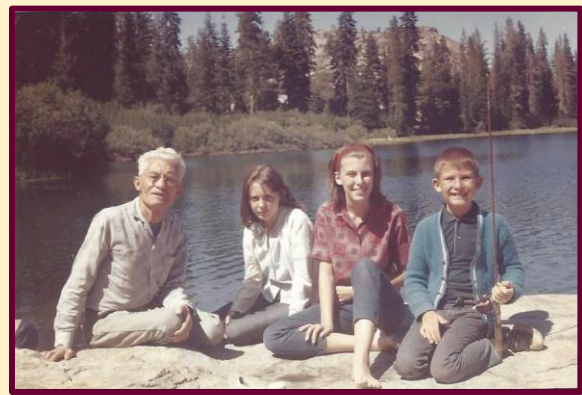


George Frey, 1958

He coordinated his selling job with his trips to the lodge so it was affordable for his family of four. They usually stayed a week or two, planning the dates to meet other families, and often staying in touch with them afterwards. Bill remembers the Gilmer family. Pat Gilmer, a postman from Menlo Park, took a walk from the lodge every day, listened to the radio,

and read the paper. George also became friends with Ottmar Goebel and they were often at the lodge at the same time along with Ottmar's son and daughter. Ottmar did the sketch of the living room in 1936 that hangs there now.

The family became friends with another lodge guest, "Mutter" (mother in German), who was in her 80s and would go on hikes at her own speed, starting ahead of everyone, leaving holes with her cane, and everyone kept track of her. She lived in Santa Barbara and George would stop there on his selling trips, once with Bill, always keeping up with his lodge connections.



Sharkey, Melinda Gilmer, Karin, and Bill at Lake Flora, 1964

Bill Frey and his wife Rhonda, with their two sons Jesse and Michael (known as "Baer"), continued the tradition of lodge visits. Most of their family summer vacations were at the lodge and they didn't travel much otherwise. Michael first came to the lodge when he was five years old, travelling with his family from Port Orchard, Washington, where they had moved 30 years before. Three years later, they came back with their second son, Jesse, who they carried in a backpack.

George had moved to Washington to be with Bill and his family, so Bill and George once took the train to the lodge, from Seattle to Truckee, looking at all the scenery from the observation cars.



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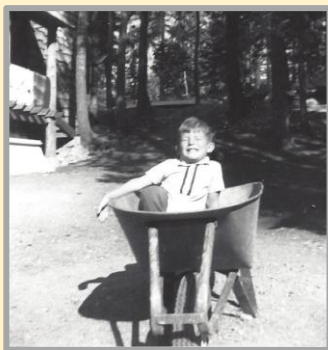
Bill's sister Karin and her husband still come now and then. His niece Sonia and her husband with two kids travelled from Seattle to South America, stopping at the lodge to hike, with their daughter in the same backpack that Jesse was in on his first visit. Bill expects his boys to bring their families to the lodge.

George lived to 101, never walked with a cane, but started having dementia at around 98 years of age. His last visit to the lodge was about 15 years ago and he died in 2012. Bill's wife passed away 13 years ago.

Bill keeps coming back to the lodge. It always feels like comfort food, he knows every nook and cranny. He knows the area so well, a great place for hikes, no need to cook, and he usually meets up with people he grew up with. He considered the lodge his "comfort place." His kids grew up here, developing their love of outdoor activities. Baer (Michael) called the lodge his "castle." The whole family was always very comfortable here, making it their home with every stay.

MEMORIES

Bill's first memory of the lodge when he was four-years old was lodge Manager Rudy's sled dogs who were kept in cages. George Tordoroff, another long-time lodge manager, had a big sheepdog "Sophocles" who would haul kids up the hill. In the spring of 1966, Bill came up with his sister

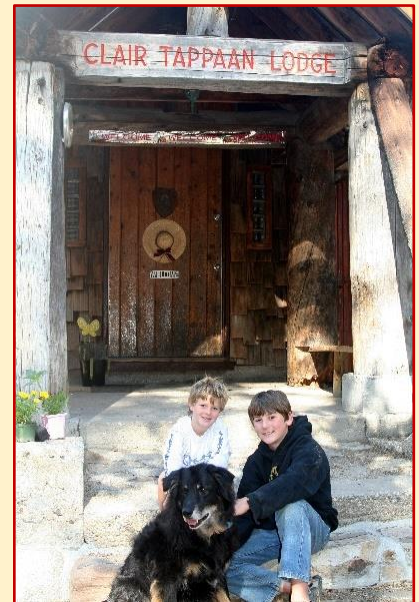


Bill Frey, 1964

Karin and their dad to ski, the only time Bill came up in the winter. It was the memories that kept bringing him back. There were so many things for kids and families to do. He remembers a nice big swing at the west end

of the lodge made out of a ski tow rope, 12 to 15 feet high. He remembers six kids being on it one time. There was a teeter-totter, a cargo net to climb around on, and a big lawn area for kids to play soccer and football. There was even an on-call baby-sitter if parents wanted to go on a hike. He remembers the big bell that was strung between two trees right at the entry trail to the lodge which rang for the start of every ski training session. There used to be a small pond "Professor's pond" behind Hutchinson, with catfish. Bill remembers a visit in 1970, before Labor Day. They were playing football in the field and it started snowing, up to three inches in August! The cook had a horse stabled at Hutch and they all jumped in the back of a truck to drive over to check on the horse in the unexpected snow.

The family usually brought their dogs with them and they stayed in the car at night. Sebastian (also called Wigglebut) was his wife's 75-pound dog. He came along for the 75th anniversary but couldn't hike much because of tender pads. So when they came up with George Frey's ashes to



Jesse with a friend and Wigglebut

place on Donner Peak, as George had requested, they had to bring Wigglebut. The two boys and Bill came up with the idea of a Baershaw (instead of rickshaw) to pull Wiggles in to protect his sensitive pads. It was made from an old bicycle trailer with carpet padding for comfort. While he



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did get a ride all the way up to the peak, Wigglebut walked back down on his own, with Bill pulling the empty wagon.

Two or more family members have come up for most of the fundraisers and anniversaries. The family was here for the lodge's 45th and 50th anniversaries, along with George. Bill came with 13-year-old Jesse for the 75th anniversary in 2009. Bill had a triple bypass a few years ago so didn't



Bill and Jesse Frey, August 2009

make it to the lodge until the 2019 fundraiser, staying a week with the boys. One evening, as a tradition, Bill, Jesse, and Baer went downstairs to make vanilla ice cream from a hand-cranked two-gallon bucket that belonged to Bill's dad. You can add anything to vanilla ice cream, and that was what his dad always made; it was a family tradition. Bill suggested that maybe there could be an ice cream social at the lodge as a family theme weekend.

CHANGES

What Bill misses most at the lodge are the families! Bill kept coming as a family unit and there were so many other families there with lots of things for kids to do. His sons were at the 2019 fundraiser, but there was no one there in their age group. He also misses the outside music and dancing that we had for the 75th anniversary.

Bill remembers getting a discount for long stays (six days; seventh free); his family was never well off, so that was always a consideration when visiting. He was never a "Sierra Clubber," but rather a "Clair Tappaaner," and he wonders how we can get back the families. There used to be Saturday night family barbeques in the summer, with a big pot of potato salad; everyone volunteered and helped.

There can probably no longer be a swing for liability purposes. They used to access the lodge from the road, up the steep south entrance. With heavier snow, one went through a tunnel to get up the slope.

There were often 70 visitors during the week, and up to 150 on the weekend, but the numbers have kept going down year after year. There are more choices in the region now and the lodge prices make it less affordable for families. He wonders what the Gilmers are doing, and all the other families they knew.

Technology (e.g., smart phones) has changed things. Getting kids interested in the outdoors and putting the phone down is hard. He remembers grandparents' weekend started by Jim Maas. It would be great to have family weekends, or work parties for families, where they could work one day and get three days free. But there needs to be more to entertain the kids.

VOLUNTEERING

The two boys, Jesse and Baer, have a strong work ethic that they learned from their mother. At the lodge, they always help with everything, just like they were home; this is their place. During the 2019 fundraiser, Baer was helping with the dishes every night, doing them fast and well! He was sensitive to everyone's needs, always trying to make people comfortable. They also helped the staff with their work. All three have health department



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Jesse and Michael (Baer), September 2019

certificates so they can also help prepare food. For the 50th anniversary, lodge Manager Rick Smith unexpectedly asked Bill to lead a hike to Lake Flora. So Bill gathered his first aid kit and took the back way, letting everyone walk at their own pace, going back and forth to make sure everyone was keeping up. At the 50th anniversary, they helped set up tables in the living room for the overflow crowd. They loved pitching in to help since their entire family, several generations of them, felt it was their comfort place.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION DONATIONS WELCOME!

Since August 2019, \$22,500 was granted for over 300 students to enjoy the experience of environmental education based at Clair Tappaan Lodge. Two grant requests were turned down due to lack of funds.

Although there will be no annual fundraiser at the lodge this year due to the pandemic, the need for funds for environmental education for our next generation of land stewards will continue once we are up and running again.

Your donation is welcome and gratefully used for additional groups of young environmentalists. The funds continue to be tax deductible through Clair Tappaan's account with the Sierra Club Foundation.

As part of the CARES Act passed by Congress in March, an unusual opportunity to donate has arisen to increase support to non-profit organizations.

If you are someone who does not itemize on your taxes, you can include \$300 per person in charitable donations as an above-the-line deduction. This means you don't have to itemize other items to claim a donation deduction. Please consult with your tax advisor for your specific situation.

We greatly appreciate any donations made, especially during these uncertain times. Such funds will only be used to provide environmental education for youth to benefit our planet.

Your donation should be made payable to *Sierra Club Foundation/Clair Tappaan Lodge* and mailed to Clair Tappaan Lodge, PO Box 36, Norden CA 95724. This allows the lodge to track amounts received for grants before such funds are forwarded to the Sierra Club Foundation for processing. Thank you!



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WHAT WILL YOUR

LEGACY BE?

CLAIR TAPPAAN LODGE

Ensure a lasting legacy by naming Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge in your will or trust to support environmental education. Contact:

Guillermo.condeso@sierraclub.org, 415-977-5740



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