Merced River Canyon Flowers

Photo by Charles Phillips
This has been a very busy time for those of us in the Gateways as well as in the Park. Yosemite Gateway Partners has sharpened its focus in several ways. We have articulated our communications role and adopted some goals for the coming year as well as having a terrific Winter meeting in January.

At our Winter meeting, more than 130 people gathered for some important work and to meet and greet our gateway neighbors in the US Forest Service. Ramiro Villalvazo, Regional Director of Public Services led a large contingent including District Rangers Margaret Dowd (Stanislaus–Groveland), Dave Martin (Sierra–Bass Lake), and Leslie Yen (for Jon Regelbrugge, Inyo–Mammoth).

Yosemite National Park is surrounded by three National Forests. In the coming months, we will be hearing more from them as they compliment YNP with somewhat different services as well as many campsites, picnic facilities and visitor attractions. See page 4 for additional information.

We also participated in a workshop facilitated by Luci Tyndall that focused on ways to assist YNP in improving the visitor experience during summer “rush hours”. Participants were divided by table and given a specific target audience to develop solutions towards relieving congestion in Yosemite Valley. All results were tabulated and become part of the park-wide and gateway-wide efforts to improve visitor experience. This effort began in 2011 as “Don’s Challenge” when the superintendent challenged the gateway communities to brainstorm implementable solutions. Good work to all who participated.

Over the past year, Yosemite Gateway Partners has worked with its Advisory Council as well as in a day long planning session to develop goals for our organization that will be consistent with the YGP mission statement which reads, in part: “…create sustainable cultural, natural and economic prosperity.” The YGP Board of Directors adopted the following goals.

**Our Cultural Goals** – Celebrate the diverse and colorful cultural landscape; Reach out to include ethnic groups in YGP activities, beginning with local Native American tribes.

**Our Natural Goals** – Support & encourage local public participation with Park planners developing the Merced River Plan; Encourage Best Practices for Sustainable Programs and facilitate a Sustainable Summit event.

**Our Economic Goal** – Develop a plan by June 2012 for YGP to be economically independent by June 2013.

Finally, thanks to the many who contributed to the Yosemite Gateway Partners efforts through newsletters, e-Blasts, quarterly meetings, and meeting Don’s Challenge.
YGP Takes Top Honors at the 2012 L.A. Travel & Adventure Show

A huge note of congratulations goes out to the 13 partners who invested their time, creativity, money, and resources to achieve this remarkable milestone for our region!

More than 25,000 people attended the Los Angeles Travel & Adventure Show January 14-15 in Long Beach. Travel planning conversations flowed steadily over both days, but dominating the airwaves at the expo was the Yosemite Experience pavilion.

YGP’s Yosemite Experience won the regional Best of Show award and was the only domestic exhibit to take home honors. “From adventure to national parks to fine dining and lodging, the Yosemite group put together an exciting and very popular pavilion at this year’s show,” stated John Golicz, CEO of Unicomm, the show’s organizer. “Frankly, I think they are a model of how many regional CVB’s, Tourism Boards and private sector hospitality companies can partner to market and educate travelers.”

The Yosemite Experience encompassed almost a complete aisle of the expo and included 13 Yosemite Gateway Partners exhibitors. (Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau, Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite, DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, California Welcome Center - Merced, Yosemite Resorts, The Redwoods in Yosemite, Merced Regional Airport, Mono County Tourism, Bass Lake Chamber of Commerce, Mammoth Lakes Tourism, Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau, and Yosemite Chamber of Commerce. The highlight of the Yosemite Experience was Tenaya Lodge’s 24-feet rock climbing wall, giving attendees of all ages a taste of Yosemite adventure.

This year’s group achieved a new level of sophistication with an integrated promotional campaign that further showcased the “High Fives” featured in the Yosemite trip ideas insert in the 2012 California Visitors Guide. YGP set a new standard for partnership with this effort, creating 5 different prize adventures that promoted cross-gateway itineraries designed to make it simple and fun for visitors to stretch out and really explore the region as part of their Yosemite vacation. Coopetition; not only is it good for our regional economy, but it helps support our efforts to better manage traffic during peak season and be better stewards of our beloved Yosemite and surrounding natural resources. Great job everyone!

Spring is here and that means planning ahead!

Sunset Publishing’s Visit California division is preparing to start planning the 2013 Official California Visitors Guide and that means the 2013 Yosemite’s Gateways Insert will be underway soon! The Yosemite Gateway insert is a wonderful piece and is only getting better!

Contact Erin Capuchino for more information on participation, ErinCapuchino@gmail.com or call 559.308.1767
First of all, thank you for inviting me to the Yosemite Gateway Partners winter meeting, and allowing me to provide the keynote address. I was impressed with the size and diversity of the partners in the meeting room, and the relevant topics covered at the meeting. My hope is that the group exercises will go a long way in meeting Yosemite National Park Superintendent Don Neubacher’s goal of reducing peak traffic congestion at Yosemite and improving the visitor’s experience. I applaud your efforts.

I want to take this time to re-affirm my commitment to enriching the Yosemite experience by making some of the nearby national forest attractions more accessible to the national park visitors. Just to give you a sample of some the attractions on the neighboring Inyo, Sierra and Stanislaus NFs, there are: 1,375,000 acres of Wilderness, most of which is in the Ansel Adams/ John Muir, Hoover and Emigrant wilderness areas; the Merced and Tuolumne Wild and Scenic Rivers; 1,350 campsites; vast areas for dispersed camping and opportunities for off-highway vehicle motorized touring.

I also want to acknowledge the vital role that gateway communities play in delivering services and additional destination opportunities to visitors. This, of course, also provides those communities an important source of economic benefits.

Again, thank you for making my first Yosemite Gateway Partners meeting a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Please count on continued Forest Service involvement. Feel free to contact Recreation Planner/Landscape Architect Trinidad Juarez of my staff at 707.562.8844, or send him an e-mail to tjuarez@fs.fed.us for any follow-up action required.

Together, let’s continue to enhance the Yosemite National Park experience!

Ramiro Villalvazo
Director, Public Services
USDA, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region
rvillalvazo@fs.fed.us
707.562.8856 (Office)
707.562.9055 (Fax)
Yosemite Grant 150th Official Kickoff
By Kassandra Hardy

Don’t miss the Yosemite Grant 150th official kickoff! Join us at the Garden Terrace Room, Yosemite Lodge, Yosemite National Park, on Thursday, April 12 from 9am to 2pm.

The Yosemite Grant 150th committees are proud to share the official unveiling with the Yosemite Gateway Partners! In addition to unveiling the official logo, we will also unveil the anniversary website, a few limited edition products, and many ways for you and your organization to get involved in this yearlong, once in a lifetime event!

What are we honoring?

On June 30, 1864, the Yosemite Grant was signed by President Abraham Lincoln. This piece of legislation was Congress’ first act of preservation of a wilderness landscape decreeding both Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees to be set aside “...for public use, resort, and recreation; shall be inalienable for all time.”

Assigned by the State of California to be the first “Guardian of Yosemite,” Galen Clark was responsible for overseeing these two protected areas and what can be considered the birth of the national park idea.

The 150th anniversary of the Yosemite Grant provides the world with a chance to increase our understanding of and dedication to the rich heritage of our national parks - all of which started with the protection of Yosemite.

It goes without saying that today, Yosemite is not just a great valley, but a shrine to human foresight, strength of granite, power of glaciers, the persistence of life, and the tranquility of the High Sierra. For thousands of years, humans have changed, and have been changed by, this place we now call Yosemite. The story of Yosemite National Park’s past, present, and future is one shared by many diverse cultures and people and it continues to serves as a leader in the evolution of preservation.

Upcoming anniversaries celebrations:
June 30, 2014 Yosemite Grant Act 150th
September 3, 2014 Wilderness Act 50th
October 1, 2015 Yosemite National Park 125th
August 25, 2016 National Park Service 100th
“Why do you want to remove all of the fish from these lakes?”

As Yosemite’s Aquatic Ecologist, I am frequently asked the question: What can I do? The simple answer is “to keep the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog from going extinct.”

The Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog was once the most abundant vertebrate found in Yosemite’s high country. In Grinnell and Storer’s 1924 book Animal Life in the Yosemite, they described the frog as, “...the commonest frog in most parts of the Yosemite section.” Visitors to mountain lakes used to find hundreds of frogs sitting quietly on rocks basking in the sun or hunting for insects in the grass. People walking along shorelines would have their progress announced by a series of plops as the frogs leapt back into the water. In 1959, David Wake, reported finding so many Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs along the shoreline of an alpine lake that, “it was difficult to walk without stepping on them.” By the late-1980s, the frogs were completely gone from this site.

Today the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog is one of the world’s most critically endangered amphibians; over 93% of their populations have disappeared and we continue to lose populations at an alarming rate. Because of their dramatic decline, the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog is a Candidate Species for listing under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and it is a Threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act.

Non-native trout are one of the primary reasons for the frog’s decline and the substantial impacts from these predators on the frog and other native species are well documented. As early as the 1920s, scientists have noted that the introduction of fish sooner or later nearly eliminates the frog.

Most fish found in Yosemite descended from the over 33 million non-native trout released in Yosemite between 1877 and 1990. Native fish were only found in the lower elevations of the Merced River into Yosemite Valley, and waterfalls prevented further colonization after the last glaciers retreated.
As a result, the majority of Yosemite’s lakes, ponds, and rivers are naturally fishless, and the aquatic wildlife, including the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, that colonized these water bodies evolved over thousands of years without predatory fish.

Highly aquatic amphibian species, such as the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, are particularly vulnerable to predation by trout. Trout prey on all of the frog’s life stages and they compete with the frogs for food. Complete removal of non-native trout from targeted lakes is the primary tool we have for restoring the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog and its habitat.

The National Park Service in Yosemite, Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks, and the California Department of Fish and Game on adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands have been restoring habitat by removing non-native fish using gill nets and electrofishing for over 10 years.

These programs have been very successful; Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs have moved back into restoration sites, and in some cases the response has been dramatic. For example, the number of Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs increased significantly in three lakes in Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park following fish removal and then frogs dispersed to neighboring lakes. In Yosemite, we have seen Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs naturally recolonizing five of our fish eradication sites.

Over the next five years, we plan to restore habitat in up to 18 lakes and meadows using gill nets and electrofishing. Removing fish from these sites will enable Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs to reestablish in these critical locations and will help to ensure that the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog is not lost forever.

**Did You Know:**

- That the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog lacks the vocal sacs that many other frogs use to produce calls, but are able to make a relatively loud call nonetheless? The call is rarely heard by humans because it is produced under water.
- That the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog was once the most abundant vertebrates in the Sierra Nevada?
- That Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog’s tadpoles take up to four years to develop into juvenile frogs?
- That the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog plays a pivotal role in high-elevation food webs, and they are a top aquatic predator and important prey for predators like the western terrestrial garter snake?
- That April 28, 2012 is the 4th Annual International “Save the Frog Day”? This day is dedicated to educating people about the plight of frogs around the world. Join us for a “Frog Fair” from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm in front of the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center.

*Photo courtesy of Devin Edmonds, USGS*
April 11-15 – Annual Chowchilla Stampede. Come celebrate the heritage of this old west town at one of the most fun and unique events in all of California! The Stampede kicks off with the herding of the bulls down Robertson Avenue, followed by fun at the Chowchilla Fairgrounds. For information call 559-665-3056 or visit www.chowchillafair.org.

April 15-21 – 5th Annual Oakhurst Wood Carvers Rendezvous. Come see the best wood carvers in the Sierra Nevada! There will be carving classes, demonstrations and seminars for carvers of all skill levels. This special week of carving is guaranteed to be fun for the whole family! For information contact Larry Smith at 559-658-2405.

April 28 – Stage Route Tour. This six-hour bus tour explores the late 1800’s to early 1900’s history of Eastern Madera County. The tour includes the Coarsegold Historic Museum, Raymond Museum, Grub Gulch, Wassama Roundhouse and old Fresno Flats. For information contact the Coarsegold Historical Society at 559-642-4448 or visit www.CoarsegoldHistoricalMuseum.org.

May 4-6 – Bass Lake Arts & Crafts Fair. Shop for arts and crafts in beautiful Bass Lake at the Pines Village from 9 to 5 pm. Food vendors, Pines Village shops and more. For vendor information call The Craft Fair at 559-288-6614 or visit www.thecraftfair.org

May 5-6 – Bass Lake Fishing Derby. Join us for the 32nd Annual Fishing Derby on beautiful Bass Lake. Catch the $25,000 rainbow trout or 150 tagged trout worth $100 each and 849 trout worth $20 each. For information call Michelle Miller at Miller’s Landing 559-642-3633.

May 5-6 – 60th Annual Coarsegold Rodeo. Saturday events include: Kids Rodeo, Rodeo Royalty, Pro Rodeo, Kids’ Mutton Bustin’ and the Dance. Sunday events include: Cowboy Church, Cowboy Breakfast and the Pro Rodeo. For more information contact Bohna Arena at 559-683-1952 or visit www.thecoarsegoldrodeo.com.

May 12-13 Spring Wine Trail Adventure. Enjoy the beautiful spring weather and wildflowers while sampling the best creations from the family wineries located along the famous Madera Wine Trail. To purchase tickets go to www.maderavintners.com or call 1-800-613-0709.

May 16 – AMGEN Tour of California. Join the town of Oakhurst in celebrating the return of the Amgen Tour of California. “Take the Afternoon Off” with sidewalk sales, food vendors and fun! Go to www.YosemiteThisYear.com/events for more information.

May 17-20 – Chowchilla-Madera County Fair. Live entertainment, rides, food vendors——fun for the whole family! Go to www.chowchillafair.org for more information and entertainment line up.

May 18-20 – 22nd Annual Bass Lake Antique & Classic Wooden Boat Show. This annual event is always a favorite. Check out the antique boats and meet lots of great folks. For entry or information call 559-733-8379 or visit www.acbs-tahoe.org.


The Mariposa Symphony Orchestra returns to the Ahwahnee Hotel with an exciting concert and remarkable guest soloist on Sunday, April 22 at 1:00 pm.

MSO Founder and Conductor Les Marsden has scheduled predominantly American 20th-century compositions, including (arguably) that century’s greatest American symphony: Howard Hanson’s Second (1930) subtitled “The Romantic.”

Some listeners may not recognize the name, but ears will perk up due to the music’s iconic use in the blockbuster film “Alien” from 1979. “It’s strikingly effective, but that use of Hanson’s music in “Alien” was unauthorized. And he wasn’t amused, either, but friends wisely talked him out of suing the filmmakers. Good thing, because “Alien” brought Hanson’s music to a huge new audience.”

The concert’s special guest soloist is Dr. Lawrence Gwozdz of the University of Southern Mississippi – one of the world’s leading classical saxophone virtuosos. Dr. Gwozdz and the MSO will perform the 1962 “Claremont Concerto” of American composer John C. Worley – a work Dr. Gwozdz has recorded to acclaim. Dr. Gwozdz is internationally known and celebrated, recently returning home after a concert tour of the former Soviet Union and Europe.

The concert will also include a true rarity: Danish composer Carl Nielsen’s “Paraphrase on ‘Nearer, My God, to Thee’” as re-envisioned by Marsden. The brief piece was composed for wind band less than a month after the sinking of the Titanic – and as the MSO’s Spring concerts will occur one week after the centenary of the Titanic’s April 14, 1912 sinking, Marsden has re-invented for symphony orchestra this “stunning, hugely effective but nearly unknown piece memorializing those lost a century ago,” as noted by Marsden.

The MSO’s Spring concert in the Ahwahnee is offered free of charge, first-come in partnership with the generous cooperation of the National Park Service, Yosemite National Park and Superintendent Don Neubacher, Delaware North Resorts at Yosemite and the Ahwahnee Hotel.

The concert will also be performed on Saturday, April 21 at 7:00 in the Fiester Auditorium of Mariposa County High School. Tickets for that concert only are $6 for adults/$4 for students and may be purchased from the Mariposa County Arts Council (209) 966-3155. Information will also become available at: http://www.arts-mariposa.org/symphony.html

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Imagine strolling through Yosemite Valley some 140 years ago with naturalist John Muir listening to his poetic descriptions of Half Dome and learning about his legendary adventures. As one of Yosemite Conservancy’s unique Outdoor Adventures in 2012, visitors to Yosemite National Park can take a step back in time by retracing Muir’s steps with his great-great-grandson Robert Hanna and Muir actor Frank Helling. The four-mile hike this April will explore where Muir lived and worked in Yosemite Valley, and his favorite spots and discoveries.

“Our Outdoor Adventures are guided by experts to provide memorable experiences that inspire, engage and educate. They offer opportunities with experts to enjoy the park in unique ways,” said Mike Tollefson, president of Yosemite Conservancy. Proceeds are poured into important restoration and protection work that Yosemite Conservancy supports in the park.

More than 35 Outdoor Adventures are available for park visitors to hike, observe, experience and explore Yosemite’s wildlife, geology, cultural history and more. Adventures span the entire park geography and may range from highly active treks to the top of Half Dome or quiet contemplative strolls exploring the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias.

“My great-great-grandfather, John Muir, knew that sharing and experiencing Yosemite was the primary way to ensure its preservation,” said Hanna. “These programs help continue that important tradition.”

Groups and families can customize their adventures through Yosemite Conservancy to discover unique Yosemite wildlife or explore a remote glacier. Anyone can register for an Outdoor Adventure or inquire about a customized experience at adventures@yosemiteconservancy.org or by calling 209.379.2646 ext. 10.
Spring Highlights
March 30 – Secrets of the West Valley
   Explore 5 miles of trail between El Capitan Bridge and Pohono Bridge while your naturalist guide shares the cultural and historical significance of sites along the way. Registration: $74 per person

April 1 – Spring Canyon Flowers
   Bring your camera for a relaxing day exploring the wildflowers in the Merced River Canyon, west of Yosemite Valley. Registration: $74 per person

April 6-7 – Leave No Trace Trainer
   Learn how to enjoy the outdoors while reducing your impact on an overnight trip to Inspiration Point. Registration: $105 per person

April 21 – A Saunter with John Muir
   John Muir descendent Robert Hanna and Muir actor Frank Helling share insights about the life and legacy of Yosemite’s greatest champion. Registration: $82 per person.

Celebrate spring by strolling among wildflowers with a Conservancy naturalist guide. Photo by Kay Parsons
This past February DNC partnered with Yosemite Conservancy to launch the new “Lodging and Learning” package for Yosemite visitors. This package includes a full-day and a half-day instruction by a Yosemite Conservancy naturalist, accommodations each night and one group picnic lunch. Participants explore areas such as Swan Slab, the base of Yosemite Falls, Cook’s Meadow, Superintendent’s Bridge, Old Yosemite Village, Ahwahnee Meadow, Church Bowl, Yosemite Village, Happy Isles and along the Merced River to the medial moraine. During the excursions, visitors learn about geology, Native Americans, John Muir, tree identification, fire ecology, Sierra weather and rock climbing, just to name a few.

Our recent guest Heidi G. had wonderful things to say about the program she experienced in February:

“My expectations were more than satisfied. Pete was so knowledgeable and friendly that you felt like a close friend after a few minutes. If I were to picture the perfect instructor Pete Devine would be my image. Pete was enthusiastic and so good about answering all our questions. The visual aids really added to his funny, exciting commentary. He brought Yosemite’s history to life. Pete also allowed us to simply follow his easy pace and quietly absorb the majesty of the Park without worrying about where we were going.....sheep following our shepherd, grazing on the beauty!” “One of the BEST experiences in all of my years of travel!”

“Lodging and Learning” is a three-day, two-night package offered March 18, April 8, 15 and 29 and May 13. The program has been well-received and we look forward to announcing additional dates.
COFFEE LOVERS REJOICE AS YOSEMITE NOW OFFERS PEEIT’S COFFEE

DNC has rolled-out the Peet’s Coffee & Tea brand throughout all of its dining operations in Yosemite. Did you know that Peet’s Coffee uses sustainable arabica beans straight from the source to its LEED Gold certified artisan roasting facility in Alameda, located in the heart of the San Francisco Bay? Yosemite operations featuring Peet’s include The Ahwahnee, Yosemite Lodge, Curry Village, Wawona and Degnan’s Deli. Check out what some of our Facebook fans had to say about the change.

Deneen H. “Impressed...thankfully it’s not Starbucks! Yosemite...Thanks for supporting our local companies!”

Hiroko U. from Japan. “I think Peets Coffee is the Best in US! Rich & fresh flavor, Love it!”

MEET THE NEW GENERAL MANAGER FOR CURRY VILLAGE AND DNC’S NEW DIRECTOR OF HOTELS

Lance Wellwood was promoted from General Manager at Curry Village to Director of Hotels for DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite. As Director of Hotels, Lance oversees all Lodging and Food and Beverage operations with the General Managers of The Ahwahnee, Yosemite Lodge at the Falls, Curry Village, and Wawona Hotel reporting directly to him. Lance started with DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite in 1994, holding various positions with us until his 2003 promotion to General Manager of DNC’s Deer Creek Resort and Conference Center in Columbus, Ohio. Since then, Lance has held several key leadership positions within our company. Prior to his return to Yosemite, Lance worked in New Business Development for DNC, assisting in the acquisition of several new properties in Australia, West Yellowstone, and the Queen Mary in California.

Dan Cornforth has been promoted from Assistant General Manager for Curry Village to General Manager, replacing Lance Wellwood who was promoted to Director of Hotels. Twenty-three years ago, Dan started at the Curry Village Hamburger Stand. He has been a valued employee ever since holding numerous positions in our operations. We are thrilled to have Dan overseeing the tradition of Curry Village.
Yosemite is Our Backyard - Day Camp for 7-15 Year Olds – Dates: June 11-15, 2012

Kick off the summer right with learning and fun in Yosemite! The week after school lets out, NatureBridge will host Yosemite is Our Backyard - a day camp specially made for the children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews of the Yosemite area community. Campers meet with NatureBridge field educators daily at 8:45 in Yosemite Valley and embark on days filled with games, exploration, and learning. For older students, the program also includes an overnight stay at our historic Crane Flat campus. Volunteer as a chaperone for the program and your child can participate for half price! For more information, contact Kesia Lopez at 209-379-9511 ext 25, email klopez@naturebridge.org, or visit our website at www.naturebridge.org/backyard

Yosemite Summer Field Research Course - Research Expedition for 16-18 Year Olds
Dates: July 28 - August 10, 2012

“This course was amazing. It was incredibly fun, great for my confidence, and I met extraordinary people I never would have interacted with at my school or in my town.”
- 2010 Field Research Course participant

The Yosemite Summer Field Research Course is for students entering 11th or 12th grade with a passion for exploration, science, and adventure. Over the course of two challenging and fun-filled weeks, students create their own ecological research project while backpacking in the Yosemite wilderness. Students learn backpacking skills, Sierra Nevada natural history and ecology, and practice the scientific method by generating an answerable research question and carrying out a research project. For more information contact Education Director Michael Bilodeau at 209-379-9511 ext 33, email yosemitefieldresearch@naturebridge.org, or visit our website at www.naturebridge.org/yosemitefieldresearch

Scholarships – NatureBridge is committed to making our programs accessible to Gateway youth. We offer need-based financial aid to qualified participants for all of our programs.
Third Annual John Muir Festival – “All Things Muir”  
By Debbie Cook

Take a break, bring your family and join the celebration on Saturday, June 9, 2012. Beginning in Coulterville at the junction of Highway 49/132, the beginning of the 14-mile John Muir Route, through Greeley Hill and on to Groveland on Highway 120.

Plan to visit and spend time while you experience the poetry of things natural and pure, as they are today in our rural lives, and as they were back then. The event runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Keeping within the theme of nature, all venues will provide the opportunity for ‘family friendly’ activities. Experience nature through hands-on learning at one of our kid’s ‘Nature Stations’; take a guided tour with the Northern Mariposa County History Center of Muir’s travels through Coulterville.

How about a bicycle tour along the historic John Muir Route with Grimes Getaways? Enjoy the exhibits and artisans displays of handcrafted items, live music, silent auctions and guest speakers. To keep you energized, food and beverages will be available for purchase throughout the day.

Want to know what it may have been like to sit with Muir? Come hear Lee Stetson’s portrayal of America’s foremost naturalist and conservationist, John Muir. Relive the famous 1868 Muir walk to Yosemite as described in the “Muir Ramble Route” guide book. Authors Donna and Peter Thomas will entertain the audience with stories from their own 2006 reenactment of their 300-mile trek from San Francisco to Yosemite.

Learn about the history of Yosemite’s Half Dome and how it came to be. Did you know John Muir was the 9th person on top? Rick Deutsch (Mr. Half Dome) will share his story and take you on a virtual tour of Half Dome.

“Walk away quietly in any direction and taste the freedom of the mountaineer. Camp out among the grasses and gentians of glacial meadows, in craggy garden nooks full of nature’s darlings. Climb the mountains and get their good tidings, Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves. As age comes on, one source of enjoyment after another is closed, but nature’s sources never fail.

Our National Parks, 1901, page 56.

To become a sponsor, participate as an exhibitor, vendor, or artisan, or to volunteer, contact Debbie Cook, Event Coordinator via e-mail at deb@johnmuir.us or (209) 878-3227. Visit www.johnmuir.us. Please join us and get back in touch with nature and ‘All Things Muir’!

Experience Nature
Hands On Science; Nature Activities for Kids and Adults. Wildflowers in bloom on Bean Creek Preserve.

Historic Tours
Muir’s Travels Through Coulterville; Horseshoe Bend; Peñón Blanco.

Lots to See and Do
Crafters / Artisans; Performances; Music; Exhibits; Food and Drinks.
Wildfire has a way of getting people’s attention, so let’s start there. The desire to avoid catastrophic wildfire in our forests motivates the Forest Service to do fuel reduction treatments locally. In particular, they have been working on several projects along the Highway 41 corridor east of Oakhurst. This corridor has been spared from a major fire for a long time, yet it is highly traveled by millions of visitors on their way to Yosemite every year. The Forest Service’s recent efforts to reduce the fire risk started with a fuels treatment project in Cedar Valley and has moved on to treating the area around Sugar Pine. They plan to move into the Fish Camp area next; all in an effort to protect us and our property along with that beautiful landscape that drew us all here in the first place.

But what are the effects of these treatments on the forest, its water and wildlife? The answer to this question is complicated to say the least and the need to have a more complete and science-based answer is pressing. That is why federal and state government agencies created the Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management Project (SNAMP). They brought together scientists in several disciplines from the University of California and asked them to serve as a neutral third party to evaluate the effects of forest fuels treatments on a fireshed scale. Forest, water and wildlife health research teams are integrated to study the same fuels treatment projects. There is a remote sensing team that makes maps that enriches all the other team’s work. These researchers are supported by the Public Participation Team which helps them make the whole process as transparent as possible.

SNAMP has been collecting forest, water and Pacific fisher data in the fuels treatment areas for four years. The Forest Service started the fuel reduction treatments this past summer and hopes to complete them by the end of summer 2012. Our science teams will then collect post-project data for two more years to measure the changes that occur. The information will help the Forest Service improve treatments so that they serve fire and forest health goals with as little negative impact as possible on water supply and wildlife.
You may be sharing your back yard with a rare and precious weasel. Few people have seen it, it rarely appears in guide books and yet it has lived in the Yosemite area a long time. The weasels are part of a small isolated group of Pacific fishers living south of the Merced River. They live in trees and are nocturnal. They have a beautiful sable brown coat, often with a white patch of fur on their chest. They survived the era of clear-cutting and trapping in the Southern Sierra but are currently quite rare, with only about 400 individuals estimated to remain. The female dens hundreds of feet up in tree cavities, producing several kits. She carries the kits in her mouth down the tree to a new home several times to protect them from the buildup of odor that might attract predators. Bobcats kill them, as do mountain lions and coyotes and the cars on Highway 41. All in all life is tricky for a fisher.

Being secretive has its price. If we can’t find them to learn about them how do we protect them and learn to live sustainably with them? You have to hire a wildlife biologist to find and study them carefully, long enough to really know them. This is just what the wildlife team from the Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management Project (SNAMP) has been doing. They have put radio-collars on over thirty fisher living east of Oakhurst, and have been tracking them by plane for four years. You might have seen the small tracking plane circling overhead. As a result of this tracking, the SNAMP fisher research team knows a lot more about the fisher’s home range, reproductive habits and cause of mortality. Researchers made an unexpected discovery last year, finding that many of those who have died were previously exposed to rodenticide.

The goal of SNAMP is to share what we are learning about the effect of forest thinning on the fisher, as well as water and forest health, with forest management agencies, local communities, and anyone who is interested in this issue. All of our research teams in this collaborative effort hold meetings and fieldtrips to spread this new science-based information around. Our fisher wildlife research team is hosting a public fieldtrip planned for May 1st in Oakhurst and a public meeting July 18th in Fresno, to share what they have been learning in more detail. We hope you will find it enlightening and food for great discussions! To learn more about the fisher team and SNAMP, please visit our website at http://snamp.cnr.berkeley.edu or contact Anne Lombardo at amlombardo@ucdavis.edu.

Photo by Rebecca Garcia – USFS
Congressman Jeff Denham (CA-19) is committed to providing for the unique needs of California’s gateway communities. In his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Denham has been an advocate for citizens living on or around public lands. A farmer in the Central Valley, Representative Denham understands the challenges of sustaining industry, economic vitality, and providing for educational needs on federal lands.

Congressman Denham is always looking for more efficient and innovative ways to manage public lands and create much-needed jobs in gateway communities. One initiative that shows great promise for revitalizing local economies and putting people back to work is the harvesting of timber. The benefits of expanding timber production would be felt in many industries; timber harvesting contributes to biomass generation for a renewable energy source and would be a boon to the building and housing market, as well as furniture production and other related industries.

To be best positioned to help gateway communities, Representative Denham sits on the House Committee on Natural Resources, which has jurisdiction over our nation’s public lands.

Recently, H.R. 4019, the Federal Forest County Revenue, Schools and Jobs Act of 2012, passed out of the Natural Resources Committee, and if signed into law, will boost the local economy while maintaining public access to the land and parks funded and maintained by taxpayer dollars. H.R. 4019 provides a long-term solution for appropriate management of national forests, and will enable rural counties to fund schools, maintain roads, and provide the necessary emergency services to keep the communities safe and spur job creation.

Additionally, in December 2011, Representative Denham introduced H.R. 3640, which would allow Yosemite National Park to acquire land in Mariposa to streamline access to Yosemite. This bill will allow greater access to the Park, benefit the significant tourism industry the region depends upon, and create jobs in the community.

As a member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Congressman Denham is currently working to ensure that gateway communities are well-represented among the myriad of issues being discussed within its jurisdiction. Revitalizing the economy and creating jobs for those living near or on our public lands is a top priority for Congressman Denham.
Rafting season in the Sierra’s is rapidly approaching, and even though there is below normal snowpack this year, the Tuolumne river (being dam-controlled) will have excellent released water throughout the summer. And both the Kings and Merced rivers will have a great, but “shorter than last year” season.

Zephyr Whitewater will start the season on April 1 with trips on the Merced river near Yosemite. The Tuolumne trips will kick in later in April, as well as the Kings river.

For information, pricing, deals and discounts, and internet special information, please visit the Zephyr Whitewater website at www.zrafting.com, or call 1-800-431-3636.
Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort

The Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort has been proud to offer for the last 10 years, six Wilderness EMT and two Wilderness First Responder and WFR-Recertification courses annually through the Wilderness Medicine Institute, parts of NOLS.

These courses include private or dormitory lodgings and quality meals, though other arrangements can be made for locals. Our large beautiful property is an ideal location with all the services you need at a value near the outstanding Yosemite National Park.

Our courses are designed to provide each of the participants with the knowledge and tools needed to make critical medical decisions in remote environments. Previous first aid training for these courses is not required and credits are offered through various colleges and universities.

The courses are two to thirty days and are useful for a variety of people and organizations in Fire Departments, Forest Service, Park Service, Health Services, Law Enforcement, BLM, Outdoor Commercial Guides, NGO’s and many Wilderness Non-Profits.

Please see www.nols.edu/wmi or contact our group coordinator at 866-826-7108 for more information. WFR Classes generally take place in March and November WFR Recertification generally takes place in April and December WEMT Generally takes place in May, June, July, October, January & March.

Photos courtesy of Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort
Yosemite Gateway Partners

BOARD OF DIRECTORS - FISCAL YEAR 2011-2012

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Yosemite National Park Liaison: Donna Sisson - Donna_Sisson@nps.gov

Thanks for your contributions for this issue. For suggestions or submissions for our next newsletter issue send an e-mail to newsletter@yosemitgatewaypartners.org

UPCOMING SPRING MEETING • APRIL 12, 2011 • 9:00AM TO 2:00PM
GARDEN TERRACE ROOM, YOSEMITE LODGE, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Online registration: http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=gilsc4cab&oeidk=a07e5ph6q8f5951b50

YGP CALENDAR YEAR 2012

APRIL 12
JULY 12
OCTOBER 11

Mailing address: P. O. Box 888 – Groveland, CA 95321