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THREE RIVERS, CA  
PERMIT NO. 20

WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THREE RIVERS AND SEQUOIA~KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

## Kaweah snowpack is 190 percent

by JOHN ELLIOTT

AFTER PILING UP those impressive precipitation numbers of two weeks ago, another series of El Nino-spawned storms has returned as predicted. Though lacking the wallop of the January storms, more than an inch of rain in the foothills and two more feet of snow in the Sierra will increase the robust pack that already exists from Lake Tahoe on the north to the Kern County

mountains to the south.

The regional average based on the February 1 numbers for the northern and central region of the Sierra is approximately 125 percent of normal. That translates to an April 1 normal of 79 percent.

In the Kaweah drainage the figures are even more impressive. The February 1 numbers are 148 percent of normal; that figures out to 90 percent of the April 1 norm, traditionally the

season's benchmark.

As of Thursday, Feb. 4, Lodgepole rangers reported 70 inches of snow at the stake; Mineral King is showing about 60 inches on the ground as does Giant Forest at elevations just below 7,000 feet.

With two more feet in the weekend forecast, all locations should be averaging from 80 to 90 inches by Monday, making

—see WEATHER, page 11

## Town Meeting: Frogs, rails, roads

by JOHN ELLIOTT

THE REGULAR MONTHLY Town Hall meeting, sponsored by the Three Rivers Village Foundation, convened last Monday, Feb. 1, at the Three Rivers Memorial Building and, as usual, there was enlightening discussion on an array of topics.

### SAVING YELLOW-LEGGED FROGS

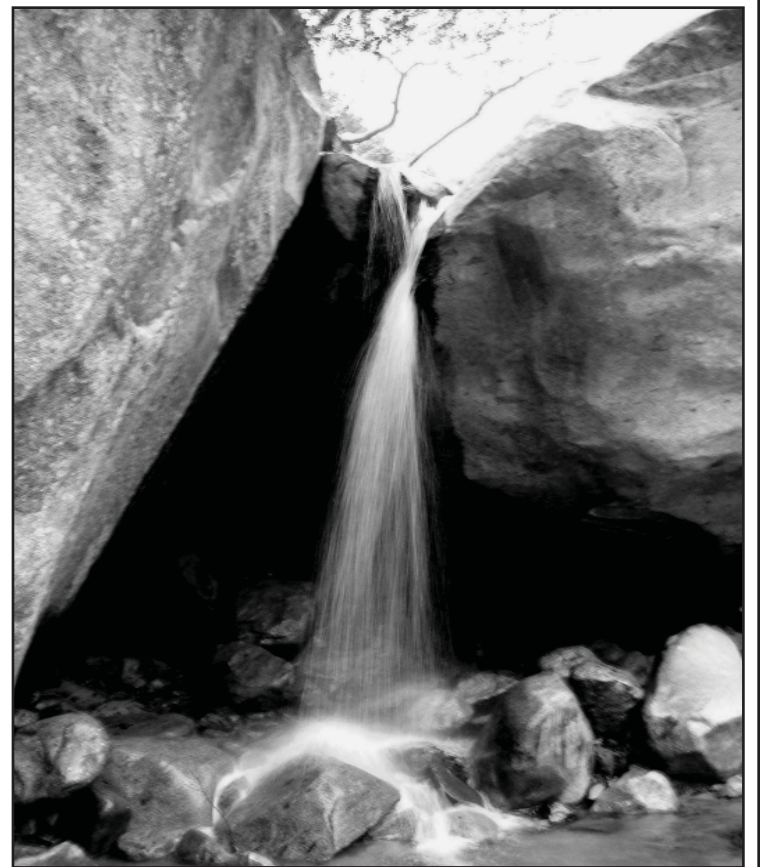
At the top of the agenda was an update on the proposed aquatic restoration plan for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Danny Boiano, parks ecologist, explained some of the background of the project that is being proposed to remove non-native trout that have the yellow-legged

frog on the brink of extinction.

Boiano said during the project scoping, his agency received more than 700 comments. Approximately 650 of these, he said, were "action alerts," the equivalent to a fill-in-the-blanks endorsement to do whatever it takes to save the mountain yel-

—see MEETING, page 10

## WATER DOWN



A seasonal waterfall brings early-season runoff to the pools in the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River below Hospital Rock in Sequoia National Park.

## Woodlake club honors 3R resident as model Rotarian

by BRIAN ROTHHAMMER

"THE IDEAL ROTARIAN" was but one of many accolades bestowed upon Jim Mathias of Three Rivers at the Thursday, Jan. 28, meeting of the Woodlake Rotary Club. Caught a bit by surprise, Jim began his acceptance remarks: "My life is constantly enriched by Rotary Club..."

Assembled to honor Mathias for 50 years of service to the Tulare and Woodlake Rotary clubs were dozens of people representing all those lives enriched by Jim Mathias. Among those paying tribute were high-ranking Rotary officials from both local and area clubs.

In his half-century of service, Jim has held every office of the

Woodlake Rotary, serving his first term as a club president in 1963. The honoree was formally recognized with plaques and proclamations from Congressman Devin Nunes (R-District 21), Assemblywoman Connie Conway (R-District 34), the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, and the City of Woodlake in addition to Rotary International.

Several speakers gave accounts of Jim as a dynamic man of extraordinary character and leadership who always put service above self. Many attendees of the festive luncheon came bearing gifts.

Jim's connection with the Woodlake club was a good match for a guy from Three Rivers where he has been a fixture

for more than three decades. He can often be found at Anne Lang's Emporium.

"...Twice a day, everyday, except Sunday and Rotary days," according to Anne Lang, owner of the popular Three Rivers eatery.

Not that he's a guy to sit around for too long. At 75, Jim is still active in Rotary and is a teacher and mentor to many grateful students in the art of wood turning.

Though many Three Rivers residents remember him fondly as their school bus driver and shop teacher, Jim has found several other productive outlets to occupy his time. In addition to 17 years (1977-1994) with Three Rivers Union School, he has been a farmer, deep-sea drill

rigger, air-conditioning service manager, EMT 1 with the Three Rivers Ambulance, and an athlete, all the while being an avid hiker and woodsman.

His skills in the backcountry were so highly regarded that the U.S. Navy sought him out to teach mountaineering and survival to their pilots at Sawtooth Pass in Mineral King. Jim has hiked every nook and crevasse of the Sierra, including Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the lower 48 states.

In 1954, Jim went to the Olympic trials as a discus thrower, but missed qualifying by eight inches. Not to be deterred, Jim took third place in the same event at the 1959 World Military Track and Field Championships at Ath-

ens, Greece.

"The ceremonies were held at the original Olympic stadium," Jim said of one of his life's highlights.

Jim first came to Three Rivers in 1977.

"I've seen most of the world, but I keep returning to Three Rivers to get my senses back," said Jim. "I spent a lot of time consciously looking for the best place to live, and this is it. The best weather, the best people, it's all here."

In 1988 he bought a log cabin kit, took two weeks off from work at Three Rivers School, hired two carpenters, and built it. It has been home for Jim ever

—see MATHIAS, page 11

### • KAWEAH COUNTRY OUTLOOK: three rivers • lemon cove • woodlake •

Saturday, February 6	Sunday, February 7	Monday, February 8	Tuesday, February 9	Wednesday, February 10	Thursday, February 11	Friday, February 12
Rain Hi 53 • Lo 39	Clouds and sun Hi 56 • Lo 38	Sunny Hi 59 • Lo 40	Clouds and sun Hi 58 • Lo 41	Clouds and sun Hi 59 • Lo 40	Clouds and sun Hi 60 • Lo 41	Chance of showers Hi 60 • Lo 40

### WEATHER WATCH

According to Punxsutawney Phil, the Pennsylvania groundhog, there will be six more weeks of winter. By mid-March when it's time for Daylight Saving Time again, we'll all be ready for spring. In Kaweah Country, daytime highs will remain in the upper 50s throughout the coming week. Missing those lazy, crazy days of the local summer? Try Newman, Australia, where on Wednesday, Feb. 3, the temperature was a sultry 109 degrees, the hottest spot on the planet.