



Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership: Serving the Sierra!



Celebrating Cesar Chavez

SNAP Monthly News

March 2007



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AmeriCorps:

Since 1994, more than 400,000 men and women have provided needed assistance to millions of Americans across the nation through their AmeriCorps service.

I. Cesar Chavez Remembered

If anyone asked me what my profession was, I'd say "political organizer." My titles have changed over the past twenty years, but the essence of my job has always been organizing. And through these years, one of the great heroes of organizing who has inspired me many times has been Cesar Chavez.



When I was first being trained as an organizer in the early 1980s, Cesar Chavez was held up as the model of community organizers. To start, he was a farm worker. You don't get more invisible as a working class than farm workers in this culture. Farm workers receive an extremely low wage, do very hard work, and suffer from extreme working conditions. When Cesar started organizing, farm workers still used short handled hoes. The short handle saved the farm owner a little bit of money by not paying for longer handled hoes. The short handle also meant that farm workers were in a great deal of pain from stooping over all day for weeding. Realizing that Cesar Chavez started from this point of great disempowerment is amazing.

Foremost Cesar was a marvelous organizer. He joined the tradition of union organizing and championed better working conditions and labor protections for farm workers. In addition, he took it all farther than anyone else had. Not only did he empower thousands of farm workers to stand up for fair labor practices - he established the power to make change. He used many instruments of change in his toolbox - including boycotts and fasting. As a result, there are no short handled hoes used by farm workers in California and there are many more protections for farm workers than before.

When I first started working for Pesticide Watch as an organizer, my

Quotes of the Month:

"You knock on twenty doors or so, and twenty guys tell you to go to hell, or that they haven't got time. But maybe at the fortieth or sixtieth house you find the one guy who is all you need."
- Cesar Chavez

"The least I can do is speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves."
- Jane Goodall

Quick Links

SNAP Shots (Flickr)
SNAP Google Group
More About SNAP

Executive Director went to fast with Cesar Chavez. Cesar was well known at the time in the early 90's and the media followed his fast quite closely. I remember how impressed the Executive Director was with Cesar's ability to shine light on the most horrible conditions and the poisoning of farm workers by pesticides. I have done many things in my life - but I have never put my life on the line for a cause. Cesar would not tolerate injustice and his passion for making this world a better place was so much more important than his own life to him.

In my first year of becoming the Executive Director of Pesticide Watch, I was saddened to hear of Cesar Chavez's death and went to the memorial in Delano to pay my respects. Like a true Gringo, I wore black and nice shoes, thinking this was going to be a traditional memorial service. But this was Cesar's memorial - so it started with a march. Hundreds of people marched through the streets of Delano carrying the famous red United Farm Workers flags, wearing their political t-shirts, and chanting "Viva Cesar." This was a funeral for an organizer - not a desk clerk. The crowd was mixture of farm workers, children, celebrities, environmental leaders, legislators, dogs, and other dignitaries. While I was hotter than heck and limping at the end - I was so proud of this man who meant so very much to so many. His leadership in the face of great opposition had empowered thousands to organize for a better life.

Sincerely,
Joan Clayburgh
Sierra Nevada Alliance Executive Director & SNAP Program Director

II. SNAP News Recap

- **SNAP Goals Tracker by Feb. 31:**
 - Restored Habitat Goal: 1700 acres**
To Date: 0 acres
 - Ecological Monitoring Sites: 212 sites**
To Date: 69 sites
 - People Educated: 16,800 persons**
To Date: 557 persons
 - Volunteers Engaged: 2165 persons**
To Date: 234 persons
- **Welcome Kendall, Helena & Lori to the SNAP team!!!** SNAP held a warm welcome sushi potluck for Kendall, Helena and Lori on March 6 at Joan's house in South Lake Tahoe. Kendall serves at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center, Lori serves at the Sierra Business Council, and Helena serves at the Sierra Nevada Alliance. SNAP welcomes the three members and we all look forward to getting to know them at SNAP events and trainings. Please look below at their member profiles to get to know Lori, Kendall, and Helena!
- **Cesar Chavez Day Pledges!!!** We're expecting to collect over 400 pledges and save 700 pounds of carbon emissions! Congratulations to everyone who collected pledges! If you'd like to learn more about Cesar Chavez, here are a couple of interesting websites about Cesar Chavez:
 - <http://www.chavezfoundation.org/>
 - <http://www.ecologycenter.org/chavez/environmentalism.html>
- **SYRCL's Wild & Scenic Film Festival on Tour held by Sierra Nevada Alliance in South Lake Tahoe.** Thank you to all the SNAP members who attended, volunteered time to help out and enjoyed the films!

- **SNAP Training Opportunities & Fun Activities:** In the past month, there have been a few interesting training opportunities, including a SWEF environmental education workshop, a winter ecology walk by the USFS in South Lake Tahoe, and a presentation on Tahoe agencies and environmental issues. If you have a cool piece of news, an event or training, please let Do Lee know so that he can inform the SNAP group in weekly updates & the newsletter!
- **BIRTHDAYS!!!! Past and Upcoming SNAP Birthdays:**
 - Rachel Chisholm: January 7
 - Heather James, Carly Nilson: February 14
 - Nicole Deas: February 23
 - Joel Passovoy, March 8
 - Joan Clayburgh, March 12
 - Jason Avina: March 22
 - Nicole Cartwright & Jon Green: March 30
 - Laura Chamberlin, Katie Hergenrather, Kelly Janes: April 3
 - Megan Martinez, April 10

III. Upcoming Events

(Reminder: Need Site Supervisor approval for these events to count as SNAP hours)

- **SNAP Yosemite Plant & Play Weekend!!!** May 4-6, 2007: Arrive Friday night in Yosemite, help restore native plants on Saturday, play in Yosemite on Sunday, and leave for SNAP training on Monday morning! Park admission and campsites for 3 nights are free by volunteering to help. Please contact Brittany (Brittany_Woiderski@partner.nps.gov) or Sara (Sara_Preston@partner.nps.gov) by email or at 209.379.1304 if you are interested by 4 PM on April 13!



Above: SNAP Members at Yosemite for January pre-service training

- **SNAP Mid-Service Training!** May 7-11, 2007: The training will be held at the River Ridge Ranch (www.river-ridge.net) and will commence at Noon on Monday (May 7). More details to come in the next few weeks!
- **Build Fences & Enjoy the Eastern Sierra!** Earth Day, April 21-22, Friends of the Inyo is looking for AmeriCorps members to participate in a fence building project along Cottonwood Creek on the east side of the White Mountains. FOI will be building fence along a desert creek, preserving essential desert riparian habitat by excluding cattle. Come visit the Eastside and have a fun weekend in the desert, getting dirty. Contact Laura at laura@friendsoftheinyo.org or 760.873.6500 if you're interested!
- **Free GPS Training!** The Lake Tahoe Basin Weed Coordinating Group of

TRCD is having a GPS training on May 18th from 10am-1pm at the LTBMU-USFS office in South Lake Tahoe. It is free but folks will have to supply their own GPS units. If you are interested, contact Jenny Francis at jenny.francis@carcd.org for further information.

- **Free Terrestrial Invasive Weed ID Training!** The Lake Tahoe Basin Weed Coordinating Group of TRCD is having Terrestrial Invasive Weed ID Trainings on May 23 (Wed) and June 5 (Tues) in South Lake Tahoe. If you are interested, contact Jenny Francis at jenny.francis@carcd.org for further information.

IV. SNAP Member Voices: "Inheritance"

By Genevieve Marsh, SNAP Member at the Sierra Nevada Alliance

This is from a larger piece about ranching in southwestern Montana. The writings originate from several trips I took to Melville, Montana, over a year, spending time with three ranches there. This is a piece from the very beginning, and has nothing much to do with ranchers, except in spirit perhaps. It is more about me, and what I identify with, and why I ended up talking to these ranchers, and perhaps why I ended up in the environmental field in general.

The spot I think of as my place, where I connect to the land with memories and something beyond, is Meadowvale, my grandfather's farm. It is what my mother calls a gentleman's farm: a pen of chickens, a garden big enough to plow, and a barn that, when my grandfather was well enough, housed two or three horses. My grandfather has recently sold Meadowvale to a developer. It was a practical decision. My grandfather wants to provide for his children and his children can't afford taxes on a 35-acre property in Baltimore County. Bite by bite the suburbs swallowed properties like this one, edging in around it until Meadowvale was quite lonely.

When I think of Meadowvale, I think of the feeling just after the rain, that soft awakening of light and drain of water through soil, the way every color is a deeper version of itself. I think of the scent of the gardenia that summers in the backyard and winters in the sun porch. The fence that runs along the border of the property is one of those lines that is more than physical, marking both time and space. You can step on the line and see what could have been. What was before.

I would often sit at the top of the hill and watch the gate below. Dog walkers, kids, couples, runners: they all stopped near the gate and looked in, maybe listened for a moment. I imagine they could almost feel the soil between their toes, hear the whinny of a horse or the sink of a spade into garden ground. Sometimes what they hear is just the wind shuffling its feet through the years of Christmas trees planted along the driveway. Sometimes it is the whispers of my now dead great uncle, sometimes the footfalls of a deer.

My grandfather inherited Meadowvale from my great Uncle Bill, along with some antique furniture and a business in town. I grew up five hours south of the place in a suburban neighborhood of Durham, North Carolina. I never lived in Meadowvale, but my family traveled there as often as once a month and I still haven't missed a Christmas. At Meadowvale, unlike my suburban home, there was more than just pavement and an acre of backyard forest to explore. I learned to drive a tractor there. I mucked around in the garden. I rolled screaming down the north hill, arriving home itchy and grass-stained.

It is a recent sale and my grandfather has the farm for another year. When I come to visit there is an urgency. I snap photographs of a crumbling tractor manual open on the counter in the saddle shed, a faded sign reading "Meadowvale" nailed above the shed's door, and the barn at first light and last. I photograph the surprising wash of blue covering the inside of a stall door, the rusted Folgers Coffee can filled with horseshoe nails, the brushes and hoof picks still hanging on nails along the barn's wall even with the horses long dead or sold, a shoot of weed growing through the hard packed dirt of an unused stall. I write down lists of the books on his shelves in the library, the squeak of the third step in the spiral staircase, the smell of my hiding place in the linen closet-soft-stale and sweet as hay-, and the shifting creaks a house makes after a hundred years. I do not idealize-this place is special, it has a toehold on an inheritance my children will never have. I want them-my children, my friends, you-to know about it, even if it is a few scribbles, a picture.



V. Getting to Know... Becca Hammargren!

Site: Friends of Deer Creek, Location: Nevada City

Where did you grow up? I grew up in Bloomington, Minnesota - home of the Mall of America and the international airport. Bloomington is a suburb of Minneapolis with a population of around 85,000. I attribute my lack of a strong Minnesotan accent (see the movie Fargo for extreme examples) to growing up there.

Where did you go to college? I went to St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota from 2002-2006, graduating with degrees in environmental studies and political science. St. Olaf is a Lutheran school about an hour south of the Twin Cities most famous for being mentioned in the Golden Girls or, if you're a music buff, its world-class choir, orchestra, and band programs.

What do you like to do for fun? I gravitate between very sedentary and very active hobbies and sports. I really enjoy reading, watching movies, knitting, and other crafty-type things. I also love getting outdoors through hiking, running, backpacking, snowshoeing, and so on. I am also an avid Minnesota sports fan, so during baseball and hockey seasons, I can often be found in animated conversation over the Twins and Wild. Traveling is also a favorite activity - my wanderlust is probably what led me to move to California from Minnesota.

What is your favorite SNAP moment? My favorite moment in SNAP so far has been getting to move to such a great area and meeting so many people. Moving from the Midwest to California, there was always the fear that things wouldn't work out and I would have difficulty meeting people. I am very happy to say that this has definitely not been the case. And Nevada City is such a great place to live - I feel very fortunate to be here!

What has been your most challenging SNAP moment? My most challenging moment in SNAP so far has probably been overcoming my fear of public speaking. Though I am not nearly as bad as I used to be, it still is tough to get in front of a group and talk. As we are organizing volunteer events for school children to help us with one of our projects, I recently had to get in front of 150 6th graders. Not the easiest thing to do but it definitely helped me to get over any lingering fears I may have.

What is the favorite place to which you've traveled? Definitely a tie between Greece and Alaska - both very different places, but equally amazing. I traveled to Greece for a study abroad course in the classics department at St. Olaf, so we were able to go to all the museums and historic sites throughout the country. Definitely an incredible time - plus, the food was great! Alaska was an incredible time because it was so big and had so many mountains and wildlife viewing opportunities.

What is your favorite quote? "It is better to wear out than to rust out." I actually just saw this quote a few weeks ago, but it definitely fits my state of mind now.

VI. Introducing... Kendall Bell!

Site: Tahoe Environmental Research Center, Location: Incline Village

(due to technical difficulties, a Kendall Bell photo is unavailable. We will have a photo of Kendall for a future newsletter)

Where did you grow up? I grew up in the outskirts of Temple, Texas. Temple is a small town that most people leave when they graduate high school. Despite all its short comings, it is home, and it is simplistically beautiful.

Where did you go to college? I first started college at Texas A&M in Corpus Christi. Corpus is a laid back beach community. It is unfortunately located on the polluted Gulf of Mexico, so swimming in it was a challenge. After about a year and a half of seeing only the dull gulf coastal plains, I decided it was time to move inland. I went to Texas State University in stunning San Marcos, Texas. San Marcos is about 30 minutes south of Austin and 45 minutes north of San Antonio in the beginning of the Texas hill country. The

spring fed, crystal clear San Marcos river runs through town, allowing for much recreational opportunity.

What do you like to do for fun? My favorite hobbies are kayaking, hiking, biking, and camping. Hopefully, as soon as I get better, skiing will be in that category.

What is your favorite SNAP moment? My favorite moment in SNAP would have to be either the potluck or the nature hike through the rainbow trail. Let me not forget having the awesome opportunity to work with the UC Davis Tahoe Research Center.

What is your most challenging SNAP moment? My most challenging moment in SNAP would definitely have to be getting so ill during the training in Yosemite.

What is your favorite quote? My favorite quote is from Margaret Mead. "Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." I believe it is very powerful and very true.

What is the favorite place to which you've traveled? My favorite place I have traveled to would have to be either Montana or Alaska. Both have that overwhelming majestic feel.



VII. Catching Up with Helena Rodriguez

Site: Sierra Nevada Alliance, Location: South Lake Tahoe, CA)

Where did you grow up? I was born and raised in South East Los Angeles, mainly in the cities of South Gate, Lynwood, and Cudahy.

Where did you go to college? I went to college at the University of California, Berkeley. My graduation is still pending until my AmeriCorps service is completed. I have one semester to go and will be receiving a B.S. in Conservation Resource Studies.

What do you like to do for fun? My favorite hobbies include pestering my dog Chachi, thrift store shopping and finding awesome stuff, I love to hike mostly because I grew up and spent time in huge cities and it is nice to catch a peek at completely organic beauty. I am a movie fiend; this is my couch potato nature seeking an outlet. This is totally cliché but I really do love to experience and try new things, that's one of the reasons I'm in Tahoe and not finishing school. I have been taking an annual road trip with friends for the past 4 years and have seen many states and parts of Mexico. This year will take me to the east coast.

What is your favorite SNAP moment? My favorite SNAP moment would probably have been the first training which I missed, but it is easily replaced with the small one-on-one time I get with my fellow office mates. It's the time away from the office where I get to further appreciate them as people. (No I am not a total brown-noser)

What is your most challenging SNAP moment? My most challenging moment is asking/telling Joan that I need to take a few days off, a few days before I needed them. I really faced one of my weaknesses, but got through it!

What is the favorite place to which you've traveled? My father is Mexican and my mother is Salvadoran, so it's a close race between the two. Though I have traveled to a few places, these are the most memorable. My mom left El Salvador when she was 17, and has not returned (33 years). So when I got the opportunity to go, I was very excited to return and tell her everything that I saw and experienced. Nothing beat that. I hope to go back with her one day.

What is a funny childhood memory that you have? A funny childhood memory would have to be how my younger brother would dress up as Batman almost on a daily basis and showcase his costume all around the block. This has to be the favorite because I get teasing privileges and will use them accordingly. BTW, he

also had the handy dandy belt.



VIII. Who is Ian Herdell?

Site: Wildplaces, Location: Springville

Sometime around the end of 1980, I put my feet down on the ground for the first time in my life - that ground happened to be in Houston, Texas. My first 18 years there were spent surfing (it is possible!), biking, fishing, avoiding the humidity and swatting at clouds of mosquitoes. About the time high school ended, I decided there were better places in the world, and off I went to live in Costa Rica. I was an exchange student my first year there, learning Spanish, surfing and exploring the country. I loved it and stayed another year studying business... blahhhhh! It was too dry and abstract... no people! It was anthropology I wanted to study. The next stop was California where I graduated from UC Berkeley in anthropology - finally! Not long after that, some crazy program called SNAP came along - we all know the story from there!

What is your favorite quote? "I always prefer to believe the best of everybody... it saves so much trouble. Everyone is more or less mad on one point." - Rudyard Kipling

What is the favorite place to which you've traveled? The most wonderful place I have traveled is to the end of Punta Uva in Costa Rica.



IX. Welcome...Lori Gubera-Stengel!

Site: Sierra Business Council, Location: Truckee

Where did you grow up? I grew up in California: until age 12, in Stockton, Modesto, Fresno; after age 12, in Fremont, CA.

Where did you go to college? Ohlone, San Jose State, Sierra College

What do you like to do for fun? Drawing, writing, singing, sewing, gardening, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, being with my family & cooking for them...

What is your favorite moment in SNAP? The hike with Ranger Mike... (editor's note: during Lori's SNAP pre-service training at the Sierra Nevada Alliance, there was a winter ecology walk led by the USFS)

What has been your most challenging moment in SNAP? Having to do a presentation with 5 minutes prep time...

What is your favorite quote? "If it won't matter 100 years from now, it doesn't matter." - Elaine Gubera (my mommy...the smartest person I know).

Where is the favorite place that you traveled to? Victoria Island, BC



Above: Brittany and Sara with John Muir at the Yosemite Bug!

X. SNAP Shots

Want to share some of your photos? Remember that we have a shared SNAP Flickr site where all SNAP members can share their photos:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/7409610@N08/>

Please refer to the instructions (login, password) about how to upload photos. Contact Do Lee if you need help to upload photos.



Left: Sol conducting water tests



Right: Genevieve taking the water temp.



Right: Bridal Veil Falls in Yosemite



Above: Eric taking a photo of the ice forming on streams in Yosemite.

XI. Tips & Resources

Monthly Tip on How to Live Green & Cheap:

Buy a share in a community-supported agriculture program or join a co-op.

(From the Organic Consumers Association Website)

When you buy a share in a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program, you pay a portion of a local farm's operating expenses. In return, you receive weekly boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables in the upcoming harvest. A share in a CSA costs about \$300 to \$400 for a 24- to 26-week growing season. Many CSA programs accept monthly payments, and you may be able to buy a half-share rather than a whole share. Check Web sites such as Alternative Farming Systems, Food Routes and LocalHarvest to find a CSA near you.

A food cooperative is a member-owned business that provides groceries and other products to its members at a discount. Many of the products lining the shelves of co-ops are organic and much of the produce comes from local family farms. Joining a co-op is often as easy as signing up and paying some dues. Co-op members that volunteer to work may get additional discounts on any products they buy. To find a co-op near you, check out Web sites such as Cooperative Grocer and LocalHarvest.

If you would like to share tips, resources, websites, and post-SNAP opportunities, please send them to Do Lee, do@sierranevadaalliance.org by the 20th of every month.

For any questions or contributions, please contact:

Do Lee, SNAP Regional Coordinator
Sierra Nevada Alliance
PO Box 7989, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96158
Tel: 530.542.4546, Fax: 530.542.4570
Email: do@sierranevadaalliance.org