



THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER FROM CLAIR TAPPAAN LODGE (CTL)

## COVID UPDATE

WE ARE GOING TO SLOWLY START OPENING IN JULY!

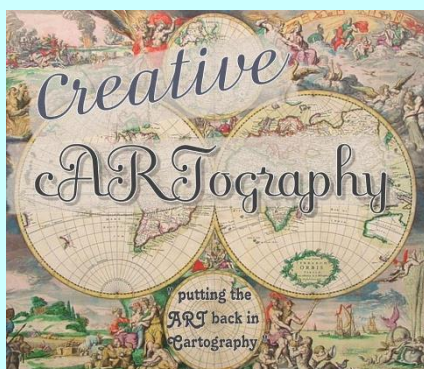
Our first “test run” will be a group of ten high school students and three chaperones for an ecology project. The program is funded by the US Department of Agriculture and will last two weeks.

We will also be having our annual cross-country running teams of about 100 [limit of 80?] kids for four nights. And we have a wedding that was rescheduled from last year.

If these July events go well and COVID cases are down, we can begin to plan our opening for leisure visitors. Please keep checking our web site [clairtappaanlodge.com](http://clairtappaanlodge.com).

We are in contact with our environmental education partners, Gateway Mountain and Headwaters, to continue and grow our programs for students in under-served schools. All group requests will be evaluated by the Sierra Club Operations and Safety/Risk Management Teams prior to approval.

Creative Cartography will be making some decorative art for the lodge.



Hutchinson is not yet available as an Airbnb but we are working to get there.

Everything that has been done at the lodge currently complies with Sierra Club, County, and State regulations regarding COVID. We can consider changing some things back when safe to do so.

## WE'RE HIRING!

Available positions are year-round, starting mid-May to June 1. Complimentary on-site dormitory housing and meals are available. Wage is dependent upon experience.

### Lead Cook/Chef

Plan, prepare, and execute menus for all meals and special events; order and receive food and kitchen supply deliveries.

### ▪ Cook II/Kitchen Assistant

Assist Lead Cook, receive deliveries, inventory.

### ▪ Guest Services & Group Coordinator

Reservations; group sales, booking, billing, and services contact.

### ▪ Lodge Assistant

Assist in daily operations in housekeeping, food service, front desk, and maintenance departments.

See [web link](#) for details or call 530-426-3632. Send your resume to [reservation@CTL.com](mailto:reservation@CTL.com).

## SIERRA CLUB UPDATE

All trips that were to begin between now and July 4, 2021 have been canceled to protect travelers and staff. Participants on these trips have been notified by their leaders. The Sierra Club is currently working with the Program Safety team, their volunteer trip leaders, and other partners to launch a series of pilot trips to test COVID protocols and determine how to restart travel programs as safely as possible.



Photo: Linda Gerdenich



**Family Fun and Service at Clair Tappaan Lodge, Tahoe National Forest, California  
Sierra Club Outings Trip  
Augusts 9-15, 2021**

### Highlights

- Maintain the trails around historic Clair Tappaan Lodge
- Explore Sierra Nevada streams, lakes, and meadows
- Enjoy engaging in after-work activities for family members

### Includes

- Great opportunity to meet and work with other families
- Lodging, hot tub, hot showers, and laundry
- Hearty, vegetarian-friendly meals and snacks

### SUSAN BARRY

Artist and CTL Committee Member

As an avid outdoor person, Susan found that painting in the high Sierra was most gratifying and gave her the opportunity to enjoy both loves—nature and painting. Susan teaches watercolor painting to hundreds of adults and children throughout California.



Susan painting the wall in Hutchinson Lodge.

She is hoping to lead a Plein Aire class out of Clair Tappaan this fall. Stay-tuned. [susanbarry.us](http://susanbarry.us)



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THE CTL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WHO WANTS TO HELP BRING PEOPLE BACK TO THE LODGE AND OVERSEE OUR NEW FUTURE!?

We are looking for folks willing to join our CTL Advisory Committee. Whatever talents and interests you have, we can use you. We try to have quarterly meetings (by phone or at the lodge). Any time or skills you have can help toward outreach, environmental education support, social media, fundraisers, new ideas for events, etc. Please contact Wally (current Chair) at [wallyjuchert@gmail.com](mailto:wallyjuchert@gmail.com) or Pat (Goshawk editor) at [patplus10@gmail.com](mailto:patplus10@gmail.com).

In 2006, Committee Member Ernie Malamud oversaw preparation of a *Strategic Plan* for the Sierra Club at Donner Summit. It is an extremely thorough, detailed, readable, visually pleasing document that covers all aspects of the Sierra Club's presence on Donner Summit (add plan to new web page and add link here)

As noted in the Strategic Plan:  
 The key to future success lies in fusing the traditional, weekend-oriented recreational operation with mid-week and off-season programs and in meeting the new environmental education requirements for public school curricula.

Sierra Club Lodges and Huts  
 Donner Summit and Lake Tahoe Area

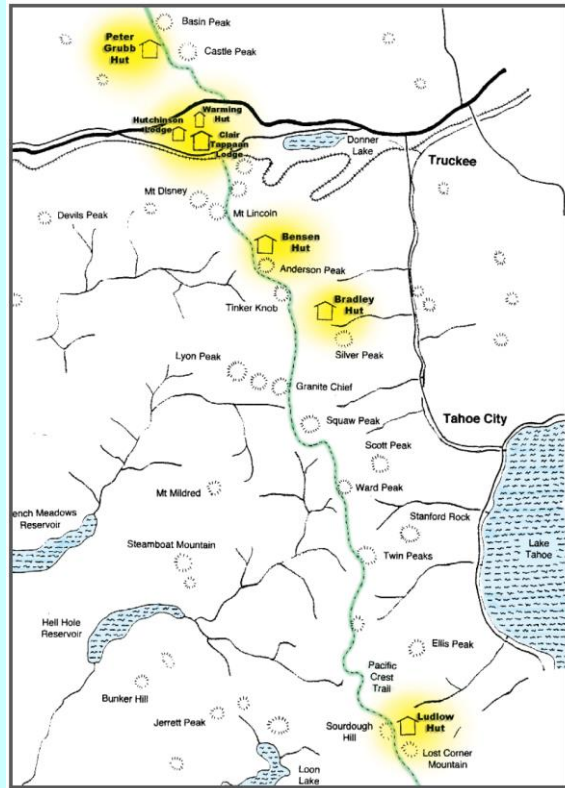


Figure 1 The eight Sierra Club-owned huts and lodges. For approximate scale, the straight-line distance from Clair Tappaan to Truckee is 9 miles. The exact position of Clair Tappaan Lodge, Hutchinsin Lodge, and the Warming Hut parcels are in Figure 3. Figure: Joel Brody

The following abridged section from that document details the Advisory Committee's history and activities.

COMMITTEE HISTORY

When Clair Tappaan Lodge was first built in the 1930s the lodge was run by a volunteer committee who hired, fired, paid bills, set up retirements, handled reservations, and did all repair work. There were over 50 people on the committee, which was family oriented with multiple relatives. On winter weekends the lodge was usually full, and annually there were about 14,000 user nights.



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Downhill skiing was the big draw, using the rope tow at the Warming Hut until the early 1980s. Summer usage increased in the late 1980s when National Outings began to use the lodge.

Many important events in the 1940s and 50s affected the way the lodge operated. Most significant were construction of Interstate-80 and land swaps with the US Forest Service. Construction of the Warming Hut and backcountry huts marked periods of continued expansion at CTL, often with Sierra Club Board members participating with hammers and saws.

Staff varied by season and averaged six people plus a host/hostess on winter weekends. Managers and staff lived on-site in basement staff quarters. Chores were done by guests and if your dinner meal ticket did not have a chore number on it, you were sent back to select a chore before you were admitted for the meal.

In the early '80s ongoing problems with sewage and water caused the national Sierra Club to develop a task force to study the situation. The old committee was disbanded and a new committee was reformulated under Sierra Club rules with nine members and three-year tenures. The CTL Committee reported directly to the Board. Sierra Club headquarters controlled funds, and lodge staff became Sierra Club employees. The committee offered advice to the Board of Directors through a Board liaison but headquarters made all the decisions. In the 1990s, Governance Committees were formed and oversight was by the Outdoor Activities Governance Committee.

Subsequently, the committee felt they had lost power to national headquarters, were not able to raise funds for the lodge, and were not able to see financial reports. The Sierra Club Board of

Directors threatened to sell the lodge. A strategic plan was created attempting to improve programs to increase guest usage, and standards were created to review risk management, maintenance, and staff issues.

In the early 2000s the Sierra Club Board of Directors determined that a management company was needed to run Clair Tappaan Lodge. Miramar Hospitality was hired although freely admitting their experience was with major hotels and not with rustic, aging mountain lodges. A five-year contract was signed. Although lodge staff were employees of Miramar, the company's management of the lodge has been minimal.

In September 2004, the Sierra Club Board of Directors challenged the CTL Committee to raise \$100,000 by September 30, 2005 or face sale of the lodge. When the small eight-member committee raised more than required, the funds were applied to that year's operating deficit and the Board voiced a "break even or sell" decree. Suggestions began again to increase programs and occupancy at the lodge and Ernie Malamud joined the efforts as Chair.

#### COMMITTEE'S CURRENT STATUS (2006)

As currently constituted, the Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee has about 20 members who love the Sierra Club's lodges and huts at Donner Summit and work to preserve its heritage. Committee members worked on teams, dependent on their interests and skills, thus covering a variety of efforts, e.g., marketing, public relations, education. Backcountry huts, Hutchinson Lodge, and the Warming Hut each have a committee member overseeing their maintenance and operation. Clair Tappaan Lodge itself also has a team devoted to safety, ongoing care, and upgrades. The most important focus today is on



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education—developing an outreach program which brings school children to the Lodge for programs, which satisfy California curriculum requirements on the environment.

To expand the Committee, Ernie instituted a new method of recruitment: anyone who offered to help was welcomed. Despite the cloud hanging over the committee’s head, many talented and committed people joined in the fight to save the lodge, primarily by working to increase occupancy and improve the bottom line. As in the early tradition of the Sierra Club, these efforts were primarily driven by volunteers.

The CTL Committee serves as a volunteer pool, providing information and labor, which otherwise would be impossible within our modest budget. A rough accounting of CTL committee volunteer hours for the four-month period July 1 through October 30, 2006, totaled 4,900 hours divided into fundraising and donor base stewardship, committee functions, environmental education, marketing, public relations, and lodge complex improvements and maintenance. By using reasonable multipliers for different skill levels we estimated that these hours represented a \$102,000 in-kind donation to the Sierra Club. A conservative yearly volunteer contribution would be valued at \$300,000.

Meetings are held three or four times a year at various locations but preferably at CTL. Agendas cover various topics and provide for open discussions and team-based groupings. Teleconference calls are open to all and provide ongoing contact for current projects. More frequent communications are handled by Sierra Club’s LISTSERV email.

The CTL Committee is continually looking for new recruits and is open to anyone interested in



contributing to the prosperity and success of CTL. The CTL Committee provides member oversight and input on operations of the Sierra Club properties at Donner Summit. Structurally, it is under the Organizational Activities Governance Committee, which reports to the Board of Directors; the Chair of the CTL Committee has a (voting) seat on Governance Committee.

Many Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee participants are Sierra Club members of long standing and are committed to promoting Sierra Club values. They represent many chapters in Northern California and many groups as well. This geographic distribution makes it more difficult to organize face-to-face meetings but is advantageous for marketing since the most effective marketing consists of personal contacts in one’s own city.

Ages range from 40s through 70s with many years of CTL use and outdoor activities. Occupations range from physical therapist, pharmacist and cardiologist to teachers, lawyers, social worker and community activist, and professional marketers and graphic designers.



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**WHAT WILL YOUR**

**LEGACY BE?**

**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](mailto:Guillermo.condeso@sierraclub.org), 415-977-5740**

*Photo by  
Kassandra Maas*



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