



# Tehipite Topics

February 2011 ❧ Vol. 57, No. 2

www.tehipite.sierraclub.org

## *Tehipite Chapter Annual Awards Banquet*

*Friday, March 11, 6:00 p.m. no host bar, 7:00 p.m. dinner*



**Gus Smith**, Fire Ecologist for Yosemite Park, will be our guest speaker this year. Gus has extensive experience in monitoring fire effects both in our National Forests and National Parks. Gus will talk about the importance of fire in the Sierra, where we've been, where we're going and all the obstacles that get in the way. Topics will include (pre)historic fire history description, how we know what no one present knew, why we use prescribed fire, and if we are meeting our objectives with prescribed fire. Gus will also discuss the future of fire in Yosemite in light of climate change and political and funding changes. Mr. Gus Smith has a PhD. in Natural Resources from the University of New Hampshire and an MS in Natural Resources from the University of Wisconsin. Gus was also an Associate Professor of Biology and Natural Resources at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin for 10 years. Gus has been the Fire Ecologist for Yosemite since 2008.

### Four Points by Sheraton Crystal Ballroom

3737 Blackstone Ave., Fresno  
SW Corner Blackstone and Dakota

#### Menu:

Choice of  
Marinated Tri-Tip  
Chicken Marsala  
Vegetable con capellini (vegetarian)

Tickets are \$25

Checks payable to Tehipite Chapter,  
Sierra Club."

Please fill out form below and mail by Feb. 25

To: Ron Mackie, Banquet Chair  
1617 Highway 49 South  
Ahwahnee, CA 93601  
(559) 683-0293 [rmackie@sti.net](mailto:rmackie@sti.net)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name of each person attending. Please check entrée choice.

\_\_\_\_\_ beef \_\_\_ chicken \_\_\_ vegetarian \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ beef \_\_\_ chicken \_\_\_ vegetarian \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ beef \_\_\_ chicken \_\_\_ vegetarian \_\_\_

If additional guests will be joining you, please attach a list with  
their choice of entrée

# Chapter Meetings

## General Meeting

February 16th at 7 p.m.  
550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno

January Program:  
**Paul Cort of Earth Justice**

Attorney Paul Cort will discuss Earthjustice's work on behalf of the Tehipite Chapter on air pollution issues in the San Joaquin Valley. He will describe the problems faced in the Valley, the challenges to addressing these problems, and the strategies pursued to date. He will also outline some of the matters that will be important over the coming year.

## Upcoming General Meeting Programs:

March 11th, 6 PM Annual Awards Banquet (See page 5)  
April 20th: Joe Fontaine and William Tweed present their books on the Sierra  
May: No General Meeting

## Conservation & Executive Committee Meetings February 9th

The Conservation Committee meets at 7 PM  
The Executive Committee meets at 8 PM  
**University of California Center**  
550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno



**SIERRA CLUB**  
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Tehipite Chapter  
of the Sierra Club  
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Chapter phone ..... (559) 229-4031  
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### Merced Group Appointee:

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### Council of Club Leaders ExComm

Gary Lasky ..... (559) 790-3495

### Council of Club Leaders Delegates

..... Open  
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### Sprawl, Air Quality

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Brian Cohen ..... (559) 227-6028

### Publicity

Karen Hammer ..... (559) 298-5272  
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# Merced Group

## Merced Group

Sierra Club  
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Merced, CA 95341

### Group Chair

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. . . . . rwebster@elite.net

### Group Vice-Chair

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### Group Treasurer

JoAnne Clarke . . . . . (209) 726-0636

### Group Secretary

Annette Allsup . . . . . (209) 723-5152

### Member-at-Large

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### Publications

Annette Allsup . . . . . (209) 723-5152

### Agriculture

Charlie Magneson . . . . . (209) 394-7045

**Membership** . . . . . open

### Publicity

Rod Webster . . . . . (209) 723-4747

### Population

. . . . . open

## Conservation and Executive Committee Meetings

(the first Thursday of each month)

Next meeting is Thursday, February 3rd, 7:00 P.M.

Rod Webster's home, 345 E. 20th St., Merced

Conservation meeting is first and can last 30-40 minutes.

Anyone with an interest in local, state, or national conservation issues is welcome to attend.

Come just to get informed or get as involved as you wish.

## Merced Group General Meetings

The third Thursday of each month (except Dec. and May)

Starts at 7:00, usually over by 8:30 or so

This month's General Meeting is:

Thursday, February 17, 7:00 P.M.

Speaker:

**Bill Magavern, Director of Sierra Club California**

Topic: "What's on the Front Burner at the State and National Level"

Often we get so involved with the many ongoing local environmental issues that we become a bit myopic. We need reminding of what's going on on the larger stage. What is Sierra Club California focusing its efforts and resources on in 2011? What are the key issues getting attention at the national level of the Club? Few are more qualified to speak to those questions than Bill Magavern the Director of Sierra Club California. Bill advocates for environmental causes before the State Legislature and executive agencies. His issue areas include air quality, global warming, toxics, recycling/solid waste, pesticides, enforcement, environmental justice, environmental health and open government.

Awareness of these more sweeping issues is important for two reasons. One-we need to be involved in work for the larger com-

mon good and Two- developments on the larger battlefields often have importance to our local concerns.

The involvement of the Merced Group in the City and County General Plan Updates is a good example of this symbiosis. Many environmental factors enter into the Update process. State legislation AB 32 mandates the reduction of GHG (greenhouse gases) for all municipalities. Most of us are aware of recent political efforts to postpone these improvements indefinitely. When the line is held at the state level that gives us leverage locally to advocate for air quality features in our General Plans. This will improve air quality for Merced County folks and reduce asthma and other respiratory health problems.

We support environmental causes near and far, even when they don't impact our community directly. But how much more passionate we can become when we see the results manifested right here at home.

### Award Recipient

At its winter banquet the Merced Group presented its annual award of appreciation to Lisa Kayser-Grant. Lisa is a Sierra Club member who is one of the local community's most involved and dedicated environmental spokespersons.

Lisa was recognized for her years and years of tenacious work on "quality of life" issues. She has been an expert and eloquent advocate for the citizenry of Merced and the Central Valley. Whether getting city-wide recycling started, working to thwart ill-conceived development, helping to clean the air through the Merced-Mariposa Asthma Coalition and Mom's Clean Air Network, whether being the first chair of the local bicycling coalition, serving on the Merced City Bicycle Commission, or attending and speaking at a myriad of public meetings, Lisa exhibits front line involvement and leadership.

She is known by those on both sides of the table for her thorough, well researched, and well thought out contributions. A glowing but accurate accolade was given by one who has known her well and long: "Lisa lives what she believes". We should all wish to have that thought of us.





Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



### Bear in mind the consequences.

The Yellowstone grizzly bear is an irreplaceable part of America's natural heritage, a symbol of the independence that defines the American character and an icon of all that is wild and free. The Bush administration set forth a proposal that would remove federal protection for the Yellowstone grizzly bear. Help Sierra Club protect our forest friends; they prefer the woods than being on display.

**Get grizzly and JOIN Sierra Club.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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<b>Special Offer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$25</b>	
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Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968 or visit our website [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

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## The Ferguson Slide

by George Whitmore

January 16, 2011

"The Ferguson Slide, just a few miles from the entrance to Yosemite via the Merced River Canyon, thoroughly covered a portion of Highway 140. At present, the obstruction is bypassed with two temporary steel bridges. The two bridges are connected by directing traffic along a one-lane road. (This is Incline Road, which is on the old railroad grade.) Since the detour is one-lane, access is regulated with traffic signals. Caltrans considers the present arrangement to be temporary, and has issued a Draft EIR/EIS which proposes a "permanent" solution. The comment period closed on January 13.

This is the message I sent to Caltrans about the Ferguson Slide. Many thanks to the people who contributed ideas, and for the expressions of support. I have found that views similar to those expressed below are shared by many people. While there are undoubtedly people who support filling the Merced River Canyon with massive concrete structures, I have to say that I have not yet heard who they are."--George, 12 January 2011

Kirsten Helton, Senior Environmental Planner, Central Region, California Department of Transportation, 2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726

This was emailed to < [kirsten\\_helton@dot.ca.gov](mailto:kirsten_helton@dot.ca.gov) >.

Madam:

These are comments on the DEIR/EIS for the Ferguson Slide Permanent Restoration Project, dated November 2010.

The following comments are submitted on behalf of the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club. The Tehipite Chapter encompasses all of Yosemite National Park and the Merced River Canyon, as well as Mariposa, Merced, Madera, and Fresno Counties, and part of Tulare County. Thank you for this opportunity to make suggestions. We trust that you will find our comments to be of use.

It should be noted that, in addition to the Merced River having been designated Wild and Scenic, this portion of Highway 140 is also a designated State Scenic Highway. It is also just a few miles from the primary entrance to Yosemite National Park. The gateways to this Park should be managed in ways which are consistent with the world-renowned stature of the Park. In part, that means that the roads should avoid the appearance of Los Angeles freeways.

Caltrans is presenting several alternatives which would involve crossing the Merced River with two permanent bridges. All of these north side alternatives would result in unacceptable urban-type intrusions in the wild canyon of the Merced River.

Caltrans is insistent that they must adhere to standards imposed by the Federal Highway Administration. This would mean 12 foot driving lanes plus 8 foot paved shoulders plus the additional width needed for drainage, supporting fill, and benches to catch falling rock in some areas. That means forty feet of pavement plus the additional structures needed to support and maintain the paved portion of the road.. It also means large radius curves.

This would mean a high speed section of highway which, for eastbound traffic, stops immediately before a 25 mph bend in the road. We predict that people will speed up on the new "high standard" road, fail to make the curve, and slide off the road or into oncoming traffic. Because of adherence to arbitrary standards, people will die. We find it hard to believe that FHA would demand adherence to standards which would cause fatalities.

Caltrans says they will put up signs telling people to slow down. Regulating speed by building to an appropriate standard would seem to be more certain of achieving the desired result.

Since Caltrans is adamant that they must build to a high standard, then we recommend that they need to stay on the south side of the river, where bridges would not be necessary and construction would do less damage.

Caltrans has two alternatives which would stay on the south side of the river. One would tunnel into the mountain in order to go through undisturbed rock behind the slide mass. The other would stay on the original alignment of Highway 140 by burrowing through the slide talus, constructing a "rock shed" as they burrow, so that future slide activity can pass over the road without causing road closures.

Caltrans claims that the latter two alternatives are not feasible because they would involve limestone salamander habitat.

If these latter two south-side alternatives are really not feasible, then Caltrans is violating CEQA/NEPA rules, which require that alternatives which are presented for consideration must be feasible.

If none of the action alternatives are acceptable, it seems that the only solution would be to continue with the present temporary steel bridges. Periodic replacement of the temporary bridges would be substantially cheaper than any of the action alternatives. Given the financial condition of the state and federal governments, this seems like a reasonable solution. With the passage of time, perhaps a more rational permanent solution will be proposed.

For what it is worth, I have timed the detour signal lights. Even when I just miss the green light, and have to wait through a complete cycle, I have never had to wait more than 7 to 8 minutes. It actually gives me an opportunity to get out and walk along the river, or at least roll down the window and listen to the sounds of nature. I have found that other people do the same thing, and I have NEVER heard of anyone objecting to the wait. After all, it is part of visiting Yosemite!

Also, visitation to Yosemite in 2010 apparently almost equaled the previous record set in 1996, so the claim that the present temporary detour is restricting access seems questionable.

We had hoped that Caltrans would come up with something better in this DEIR/EIS, but the document contains the same ideas which were presented previously, in spite of the extensive public comments that Caltrans has received over the past few years.

We have grave reservations over what Caltrans may wish to do in the Merced River Canyon. If it is truly not feasible to stay on the south side of the river because of limestone salamander considerations, then the No Action alternative should be selected. The north side proposals all involve massive and unacceptable intrusions into the canyon, doing violence to the Wild and Scenic River designation, to the State Scenic Highway designation, and to the Merced Canyon's role as the primary approach to Yosemite National Park. None of the alternatives which involve crossing to the north side of the river are acceptable.

Thank you for seeking public comments on this project. We trust that you will find our comments to be useful.

George Whitmore, Chair  
Tehipite Chapter Yosemite Committee  
Sierra Club

## **Friant Ranch: Unwise Choice for Fresno County**

By Gary Lasky

Our Tehipite Chapter is dedicated to protection of our quality of life in Fresno county and to halt unwise development plans. On Tuesday, February 1, the Friant Ranch project is coming up for a vote before the Fresno County Board of Supervisors for final approval.

This project represents all that is wrong with the crazy-quilt land use and development in our County. Developers with deep pockets are dangling the promise of new property taxes before the county, assuring the public that they will pay the costs of new roads, sewage and water supplies.

We doubt it.

Specifically,

- The Friant Ranch project is not consistent with the Fresno Blueprint Planning Process. Situated 20 miles from downtown, this "new town" completely leapfrogs vacant land in an area without access to existing municipal infrastructure or transit.

## **Great**

### **San Joaquin River Clean-up**

Please contact Richard Sloan at 559-696-2971, [riverrich1509@aol.com](mailto:riverrich1509@aol.com), Steve Starcher, 559-289-8874, [sastarcher@gmail.com](mailto:sastarcher@gmail.com) or Steve Haze, 559-970-6320 re opportunities to help clean up the San Joaquin River.

## **Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park**

**Reserve early for 2011 !!**

**July 16-19; July 30-August 2; September 9-11; October 17-19**

**Explore the wild, windswept islands of Channel Island National Park. Enjoy the frolicking seals and sea lions. Train your binoculars on unusual sea and land birds. Hike the trails to find blankets of wildflowers and plants found in no other place on earth. Kayak or snorkel the pristine waters--- or just relax at sea. These live-aboard, eco tours depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68' twin diesel Truth. Fee (\$785 for July trips; \$590 for September and October) includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks, beverages, plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to lead hikes, call attention to items of interest and present evening programs.**

**To make a reservation mail a \$100 check, payable to Sierra Club to leader: Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732.**

**Contact leader for more information (626-443-0706; [jholtzhl@aol.com](mailto:jholtzhl@aol.com))**





- Regional Transportation plans for Fresno County do not accommodate the scale of growth proposed for this region. Friant Ranch seeks approvals without mitigation for significant traffic impacts. None of the necessary road improvements are planned for.

- The rural location of this project creates insurmountable challenges for Greenhouse Gas reductions and compliance with Air Quality laws. Increased distance from vehicle destinations will create prohibitive costs for the developer to properly mitigate, or else the public will be left to finance necessary road improvements.

- Other harmful environmental impacts resulting from the poorly planned Friant Ranch project include loss of valuable farmland without mitigation, threats to progress in salmon recovery efforts and the San Joaquin River restoration Program due to the dumping of treated municipal wastewater into the river, and the location of expensive water supplies which must be imported.

\*\*\*\*\*

We need your help, now, to sound the alarm about Friant Ranch and what it would do to our landscape, traffic, air quality and water supply, not to mention the unaffordable costs in the future. Things you can do to help:

- \* Write a Letter to the Editor to the Fresno Bee. Copy your letter to (a) this email address so the Sierra Club will have a copy and (b) to Fresno County, so it will become part of the public record. This requires no technical expertise. We can provide you with ideas and it can be just a couple of sentences. If you like, we can review your submission before you send it in.

- \* Attend the Fresno County Board of Supervisors meeting at the Hall of Records, 2281 Tulare Street, 3rd Floor, Tuesday, February 1 at 2:00 PM (last until 6:00 PM). This is where the Supervisors will vote on final approval of the Friant Ranch project.

I know, it can feel daunting to try and stop a steamroller! Fortunately, we have the benefit, in Fresno, of volunteers with years of experience. We are skilled at revising or halting inadequately planned development projects and to urge our elected officials to conduct proper regional-scale planning.

BUT we need your volunteer efforts to be effective ... please contact Gary Lasky at data.nations@gmail.com or 559-790-3495 if you are interested in protecting Fresno's quality of life from unaffordable sprawl.

Thank you for your support!

## CINECULTURE FILM SERIES: CSU Fresno

Film Screenings Friday, 5:30 p.m., McLane Hall

March 25:

### Living Downstream (2010)

Based on the acclaimed book by ecologist and cancer survivor Sandra Steingraber, Ph.D., *Living Downstream* is an eloquent and cinematic feature-length documentary. This poetic film follows Sandra during one pivotal year as she travels across North America, working to break the silence about cancer and its environmental links. *Living Downstream* is a powerful reminder of the intimate connection between the health of our bodies and the health of our air, land and water. 85 minutes.

<http://www.livingdownstream.com/>

## Cross-County Skiing at Tamarack Ridge

The following photos were sent to Tehipite Topics by Tehipite member Brenda Markham, who took them on a beginners' cross-county ski trip led by Tehipite Chapter Outings Leader Walt Taguchi on January 8. It looks fun, and these photos prove that even expert skiers sometimes fall. If you would like to try cross-country skiing, more trips are scheduled on page 7.



Leader Walt Taguchi takes a fall on the Raven Trail ...



But a big smiles proves it's all fun!



Steve Mortimer enjoys the Shaver Overlook. Tehipite Chapter offers many trips like this one, with great natural views just like this. They are on page 7 of the newsletter. You can find the most up-to-date outings listings at the Tehipite web site at [Tehipite.SierraClub.org](http://Tehipite.SierraClub.org). Photo by Brenda Markham.

## Send Us Your Stories and Photos!

Hey, Tehipite Members! Break into the world of nature and environmental journalism! Tehipite Topics is your newsletter and your place to share with fellow members. Please send me your stories and photos and tell your fellow members what you are thinking and where you have been on outings.

Maybe something is going on in the environment around your neighborhood that you don't think is right. Here's your chance to shout it out. Write it up and send it in.

Maybe you just went on an outdoor trip somewhere close to home or to an exotic place in Europe or Asia or South America. Tell your friends in Tehipite Chapter about it. Write it up and send it in.

Don't worry about spelling or grammar; I will correct errors and make you look like a professional. All you have to do is be as descriptive as possible—the more detail the better. From my perspective, more is better. So throw in everything but the kitchen sink—no, even throw in the sink. I'll take it out if I don't think the sink will work.

# Outings Schedule

## Outing Ratings

Distance	Elevation Gain
1) up to 6 miles	A) under 1,000 feet
2) 6 to 10 miles	B) 1,000 to 2,000 feet
3) 10 to 15 miles	C) 2,000 to 3,000 feet
4) 15 to 20 miles	D) 3,000 to 4,000 feet
5) over 20 miles	E) over 4,000 feet

Our Tehipite Chapter Outings Chair is Marcia Rasmussen, Marcia@BigBaldy.com, 559-332-2419. Please contact Marcia with any questions concerning our outings program. Contact the trip leader directly if you are interested in one of the listed trips.

Tehipite Chapter outings are free and open to the public. All leaders are unpaid volunteers assuming responsibility for a good trip, and your cooperation is mandatory. Please review additional trip and participant requirements at [www.tehipite.sierraclub.org/outings](http://www.tehipite.sierraclub.org/outings).

Outings Leaders may post their own trips on the web page or send them to Marcia@BigBaldy.com.

CST #2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California. California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund (TCRF) under the California Seller of Travel Act. The TCRF is not applicable to these Outings. The law requires us to advise you that you would not be eligible to make any claim from the TCRF in the unlikely event of default by the Sierra Club. California law also requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. The Sierra Club has such a trust account.

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## Sierra Club California Needs Your Help

You have great people in Sacramento lobbying to protect the Sierra and on other critical issues like climate change. Bill Magavern, Jim Metropoulos, and Annie Pham do a terrific job, and they need our help. Please go to the Sierra Club California web site at

[www.sierraclubcalifornia.org](http://www.sierraclubcalifornia.org)

**Donate generously!**

## Required Liability Waiver

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the Liability Waiver before you choose to participate on an outing, please go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

## Beginner's Snowshoe Hike (1A)

**Feb. 6, Sunday**

Since it's Super Bowl Sunday, we may have the trail to ourselves! Plan to go to Coyote and take the Eagle Trail to Shaver Lake Vista. This is an easy trail, but level of effort required is dependent on snow conditions. Bad driving conditions will result in trip postponement. Karen Hammer 298-5272

## Calaveras Big Trees, highway 4 (Yokuts)

**February 6, Sunday**

Snowshoe Hike (1A)

2 1/2 -3 mile trail through the redwoods, ending at the warming hut where they serve hot cocoa and spiced cider. Bring water, sack lunch, ten essentials, and money for dinner on the way home and for the drivers. Meet at Denny's parking lot in Oakdale at 8:00am to carpool. Contact Monica Casey at 209.996.0058 or hikerlady1955@gmail.com .

## Morgan Territory Regional Park (Yokuts)

Sunday, February 27, 2011 - 8:30am

Day Hike, Rating: Intermediate

Leader: Elaine Gorman

This park, which is part of the East Bay Regional Park system, offers plenty of leg muscle action as we follow the old ranch roads for about 8 miles (2A). We will pass by stock ponds, shady creeks, and grazing cows. Fabulous views will reward our labors as we top out on the ridges. Bring binos for spotting raptors and migrating birds. Meet at No. Modesto Park 'n' Ride (on Sisk Rd., adjacent to Vintage Faire Mall) at 8:30 am. Bring lunch, beverage, hiking boots, warm/rain gear, hiking poles (recommended), hat, other essentials, and \$\$ for carpool. To sign up contact leader Elaine Gorman 209.524.7630 or goford@sbcglobal.net

## Carrizo Plain National Monument (1A)

**April 2nd, 2011 (all day)**

Guided tour and hikes on Sat. (9:30 - 2:30 p.m.). Visit Painted Rock and Soda Lake among other sites. Possibly catch a good wildflower display. Option to camp out overnight Fri. and/or Sat. night. Rustic conditions. Must carry in water. Karen Hammer 298-5272

## Ascent to Glacier Point and post hike barbecue

Saturday, June 4, 2011 - 7:30am - 8:30pm

Day Hike, Rating: Intermediate

Ascend to Glacier Point via the 4 mile trail with views of Yosemite Falls across the valley. This is moderately strenuous and is for hikers who are reasonably fit and accustomed to doing hikes of this length and elevation. Bring a minimum of 2 Leader: Karen Hammer 298-5272

## Mt. Whitney Summit - (date to be decided)

Thursday, July 21, 2011 - 12:00am - Saturday, July 30, 2011 - 12:00am

Day Hike, Rating: Difficult

Interested in climbing the highest peak in the 48 contiguous US states? We are excited to offer this fabulous trip. It is one of THE premier hikes in the country, not only because of Mt. Whitney's "highest 14er" status, but because of the hike's extreme, rugged beauty. This is simply a must do hike.

Wilderness Permits for Mt. Whitney are in great demand and are distributed by lottery in February. We will request July 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, or 30. We hope to be granted a permit for ONE of these dates, with space for ten hikers. As soon as we know, we will need \$15 from each hiker for the permit. Leader: Gerald Vinnard 559-431-5780 or gvinnard@hotmail.com or Marcia Rasmussen, 559-332-2419 or Marcia@BigBaldy.com



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Deadline for *Tehipite Topics* is the 15th of each month. Please submit material to [wattsvalleypreservation@gmail.com](mailto:wattsvalleypreservation@gmail.com).

### Words from Our Founder, John Muir

A paragraph from John Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra* rearranged as poetry by Chip Ashley

#### Gentle Winds and Panther Lilies

How gently the winds blow !  
 Scarce can these tranquil air-currents be  
 called winds.  
 They seem the very breath of Nature,  
 Whispering peace to every living thing.  
 No swaying of tree-tops.  
 Not a leaf moves,  
 Not even a single lily swinging on its  
 stalk,  
 Though they are so tall.  
 What grand bells these lilies have!  
 Big enough for children's bonnets.  
 I would draw every leaf of their wide  
 shining whorls  
 And every curved and spotted petal.  
 More beautiful, better kept gardens  
 cannot be imagined.



#### A Few More Words about Wilderness (Continued from January)

by Chip Ashley

Notwithstanding the ancient media moguls' efforts to control the message about wilderness as a fearful place, it is probably easier to take the human out of the woods than to take the woods out of the human. That may be why many of us civilized folk still have moments when we would like to return to the land and, as Yeats puts it, "live alone in the bee-loud glade." The woodlands, mountains, and grasslands—yea, even the deserts, are part of us. Experiencing these places restoreth our soul. We hear a calling of the wild. A mere 10,000 years of "commodious" city life (more commo-

ous for the patricians, I fear, than for the plebeians) has not removed the woods from down deep inside of us. That is why we need places like Lost Lake Park to sooth the savage beast—the ancient hunter-gatherer—that still resides in each of us just under the skin.

The wild part of us is the basis of the wilderness aesthetic—why wild places, flowering meadows and rolling grassy vistas with the snow-capped Range of Light beyond, appeal to us with a gentle luring. That is why we now pass legislation to set aside wilderness areas—places where we feel most comfortable. They are soothing because they remind us of our ancient rustic home. Thus, for the past 200 years of the industrial revolution and the information age, the word wilderness has ameliorated. Wilderness may have some fearfulness about it, but that is actually desirable because we need wild challenges to remind us who we really are underneath the sweatshop made clothing and hair gel. At heart, in our hard-wiring, we are hunter-gatherers, and we need to embrace that wild heritage. The hunter-gatherer aesthetic is built into us. Wilderness is beautiful. Wilderness is good.