



Tehipite Topics

December 2011 ❧ Vol. 57, No. 10

www.tehipite.sierraclub.org

Willow Creek Collaboration

Field Trip

Chip Ashley

On September 18th I joined a group of about thirty, including Bill and Jan Fjellbo of Tehipite Chapter, for a field trip to the Willow Creek Collaborative Restoration Project site. We met at 9 AM at the North Fork offices of the National Forest Service. Facilitators Mandy Vance and Elissa Brown of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy called us together, and we quickly broke up into small groups for carpooling to the two sites we were scheduled to visit that day. Bill and Jan Fjellbo and I rode with District Ranger Dave Martin.

The line of a dozen cars (mostly pickups and SUVs due to rough roads) headed east on Minarets Road. Soon we turned slightly north and began the steady climb up Whisky Ridge. Jan kept up a lively conversation with Dave during the drive of perhaps 30 minutes. We had started out at 2600 feet elevation at the ranger station and climbed to about 6000 feet up the switchbacks on the dirt logging road. The road leveled off at the top of the ridge, and we made the first of our two stops. We got out and facilitator Elissa invited us to walk around the area for a few minutes noting our general observations

See Willow Creek, page 4



Tehipite activists Jan and Bill Fjellbo use a granite boulder as a pillow as they participate in the discussion at Benedict Meadow

SAVE THE DATE!

The annual Tehipite Chapter Awards Banquet will be held **March 9** at the Four Points by Sheraton. Guest speaker will be Yosemite Superintendent Don Neubacher. Look for details and ticket order form in January Topics.



Appointed Yosemite Superintendent March 2010, Don Neubacher was previously superintendent at Point Reyes National Seashore for 15 years. He has been in the National Park Service for 30 years.

Climate Ride California, 2011

Tom Cotter

Bikes are about the best symbol we have on this planet. They're universally used by rich and poor around the world, they're a big part of the solution to the climate crisis, and bikes are just plain fun. At 350.org we're fighting to raise awareness and build a global movement around climate change, so there couldn't be a better fit for us than Climate Ride, with its strong sense of hope and possibility.

~Bill McKibben, co-founder 350.org

At approximately 12:35 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 6, 125 cyclists dressed in the blue, green and white cycling jerseys and shorts of Team Climate Ride California 2011 rolled down Polk Street to a lively reception in front of San Francisco City Hall — the completion of a 320-mile epic cycling journey that began five days earlier from Fortuna in Humboldt County.

Each of the riders — and I was proud to be one of them — were riding to raise money for one or more beneficiaries focused on various environmental, sustainability and alternative en-

See Climate Ride, page 5

The Desert, No Longer a Desert

Chip Ashley

And at last they have turned to the desert!

John Charles Van Dyke, 1903

In 1920, of the Colorado River, philosopher John C. Van Dyke wrote the following in *Grand Canyon of the Colorado*:

“And to its loneliness. From its rise in the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming to its debouchment in the Gulf of California it is a lonely River. There is no city at its source, nor at its mouth, nor yet again along its length. Yuma and its kind, perched on a bench in the desert, seem as much out of place as might a town in the depths of the Canyon itself. The River knows no cities. For seven hundred miles it is not bridged nor navigated nor mill-streamed nor utilized by mankind. It goes its lonely way.”

“The utilitarians look at it and perhaps wonder how they can harness it, make it turn wheels, generate electric
ity, or irrigate the

See Desert, page 6

TOPICS GOING QUARTERLY

Many thanks to members sending in comments on the Topics going quarterly. Most have requested that to protect the environment, neither glossy nor color be used

So for the time being, we are going to stick with a larger version of what we now have-- sixteen pages instead of eight, with the same paper.

This is not written in stone. We would still like to hear what you think of all this. Please send us your comments to wattsvillepreservation@gmail.com. or via the Postal Service to PO Box 5396, Fresno CA 93755-5396

Chapter Meetings

General Meeting

FREE AND OPEN TO GENERAL PUBLIC

December 21th at 7 p.m.

UC Center, 550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno

**COASTAL NORWAY & THE POLAR ARCTIC
A DIGITAL SLIDE SHOW BY HELEN GIGLIOTTI**

Be sure to add this date to your Christmas Calendar; it is Helen Gigliotti's beautiful and exciting gift to our membership.

Wednesday, December 21, 2011 @ 7:00 pm The University of California Center

550 E. Shaw Ave. (across from Fashion Fair)

Join Helen as we cruise the waters of coastal Norway north from Bergen while experiencing scenic coastal towns and magnificent fiords. Medieval churches and cliffs abounding with bird rookeries greet us as we cross the Arctic Circle en route to Kirkenes on the northern Russian border.



We then make our way across the Norwegian Sea to the remote archipelago of Svalbard where we board our expedition ship to explore the mountainous, glacier and snow-covered islands of the Arctic north. Svalbard is home to over 2,000 polar bears, walruses, reindeer, ringed and

bearded seals, Arctic fox and enormous concentrations of seabirds including large colonies of dovekeys, black-legged kittiwakes, thick-billed murrelets and northern fulmars. Zodiacs are used to approach the wildlife at sea, negotiate island landings and navigate through the pack ice into glacier-filled fiords. As a bonus, the arctic wildflowers are in full bloom, enhancing the landscape with an exhilarating display of color. Don't miss this adventure into the northland!

Conservation & Executive Committee Meetings December 14th

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



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Merced Group

Conservation and Executive Committee Meetings

Conservation and ExCom meetings are the first Thursday of each month. Next one is Thursday, Dec.1st , 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.

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.

By the time this posts we will have had our December meeting - our Annual Banquet on the 3rd. Hope you attended and enjoyed. So moving on to our next meeting in January:

Thursday, January 19th, 7:00 PM

Merced United Methodist Church, 899 Yosemite Parkway (park in the lot off Cypress Ave.)

Laura Allen of Greywater Action will present : "Greywater Recycling- A Solution for Merced County?". Last year when David Cehrs spoke to the Merced Group he shared that residential/urban water use is the source of the greatest water waste. This month's speaker will explain how much of the water that we use in our homes can be recycled and reused on site. "Greywater" from baths and showers, washing dishes and clothes, need not head down the drain and off to the

sewage plant. Instead, with a proper system in place, it can be recycled and used by the homeowner or business for landscaping and crops.

This means of conserving water is a very current topic in Merced County. Throughout the General Plan update process the water and conservation focus groups have made sure that greywater policies were in the draft plan (in particular, requiring or at least encouraging all new residential development to be plumbed with greywater hookups). Unfortunately the planning commission recently recommended that these policies be dropped because the County Environmental Health Department commented that greywater is not an "efficient" means of watering landscapes. Laura's group, Greywater Action, can help speak to this concern and can educate us about changes in building codes that make private retrofits more feasible.

Other areas where Greywater Action has expertise in saving water are composting toilets and rainwater harvesting. Composting and dry toilets use natural processes to turn human excreta into a valuable soil amendment. They typically use no water, or very little water in commercial scale applications. They have found greatest use at large gatherings like outdoor concerts and at refugee camps where sanitation is a formidable challenge. Harvesting rainwater can reduce our need--and demand--for water transport systems that threaten the health of the water cycle and our local environments. On any house lot, there are three potential sources for harvesting the rain: direct rainfall, street harvesting, and roof harvesting.

Education is the first step in promoting these water conserving solutions. Greywater Action is heavily involved in that task. They provide workshops, trainings, presentations, theater, and a demonstration booth on sustainable water use technologies. We will be getting the "introductory" lesson. Hands on participatory "lessons" in installation are offered in the "advanced course".



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.

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Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
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Willow Creek ,from page 1

and impressions of the place and then meet a little ways further down the road for a discussion. We were given a sort of guided handout on which to write notes and observations.

Most of the group walked down the road toward the meeting site, but I got off the road and walked parallel to it a couple dozen yards away. We were in a mixed conifer forest with ponderosa pine, white fir, and incense cedar, with some scattered black oak. The forest floor was heavily marked with tractor tracks and cuts, but these had several years of duff covering them. Some large granite boulders were scattered about, some as big as small houses. I saw both large and small stumps, with the larger ones pretty well deteriorated and obviously decades old, certainly the result of an old timber cut. The smaller ones appeared to be the result of a mechanical thinning operation of a few years earlier. There was also evidence of recent fire. The stumps were all charred and charring could be seen on the lower trunks of the larger trees

We started our walk in a stand of large cedar, ponderosa, and white fir with only a small amount of undergrowth of small fir and cedar, with some scattered manzanita and white thorn. When I got to the area designated for the discussion, the forest thinned out to a few large ponderosa. Here there was much less duff and more bare soil with pine, fir, and cedar seedlings coming up everywhere. It looked as if the fire had been much hotter in this area, having burned off most of the duff. I noted a rangy, sparsely foliated floral species I was not familiar with and asked Dave Martin if he knew it. He did not, but directed me to Joanne Freemire, a local naturalist, who had a copy of Jack Laws' Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada, which I also own and highly recommend. She quickly keyed out the plant, Coville's groundsmoke, *Gayophytum eriospermum*.

Elissa Brown then called us all together for what turned out to be about an hour of discussion. We got reports from NFS officials and scientists who had worked on this area. When Elissa asked everyone what they would like this forest to look like, most opined that it should be restored to its precontact conditions; that is, its condition before the appearance of Europeans in this area, which started in a serious way about 160 years ago, about 1850, at the time of the Gold Rush. One noted that these forests have always been managed by humans since Native Americans managed them, largely with their version of prescribed

fire, to keep the forest floor clear for hunting and gathering, previous to the appearance of Europeans. Another said we should aim for prehuman conditions. Yet another pointed out that the area was a heck of a lot closer to an ice age at the end of the prehuman era—about 15000 years ago—and thus much wetter and cooler. Such conditions would be impossible to restore in a period of global warming.

We broke for lunch at this site and everyone sat on logs or the ground and enjoyed conversation for half an hour. I ate with Brett Matzke of the California Trout Association. After lunch we all drove a few miles farther east to Benedict Meadow. Hydrologist Andy Stone of the Bass Lake NFS Station walked down to the meadow and found it was quite wet, so the group walked around through the forest to the west side of the meadow and then broke through the dense growth around the meadow and walked out into the meadow. I carefully maneuvered through the thick line of azaleas at the meadow's edge and discovered the meadow still too wet for my hiking boots (I like dry socks). A few others were out in the middle of the meadow when Elissa called us all together to discuss our observations. For me, the best part of this discussion was hydrologist Stone's talk on meadow restoration.

Meadows, especially those with a steep slope like Benedict can be adversely impacted by cattle grazing, one of the results of which is erosion. Cattle can be hard on meadows not only because of over-grazing, but just from congregating and walking on the grass and other plant life, which degrades and exposes soil, especially along streams. Big storms and heavy water flow can start cups in the soil surface, which start head-cuts. A head-cut starts at the uphill end of a small cup so that the water flowing into the cup digs it deeper and begins to cut the back edge of the cup so that it gets deeper and bigger. This action accelerates as the distance between the top of the cut and the bottom of the cup gets larger because the force of the water hitting the bottom gets stronger and causes more erosion. I have observed this kind of erosion at a favorite meadow in the Sierra of Fresno County. Cattle have been grazed there since before the first permits were issued by the Forest Reserve in 1892. Erosion did not start in earnest there until 1967 when the area experienced an unusually heavy rain year. The surface, normally protected by a heavy mesh of roots, had been weakened and very quickly head-cuts up to

10 feet deep occurred in the sensitive part of the meadow along the stream that drains the meadow. This meadow is nearly level, but the extremely heavy flows cut deep into the meadow. One can imagine how quickly damage can occur on sloping meadows like Benedict.

Stone explained that often head-cuts can be corrected with local material, like rocks and slash, which is readily available at the Benedict site. Using these materials, one can build structures to catch soils and plant materials flowing down stream to build up the stream bottom. Some meadows have conifer encroachment, and small conifers can be cut down with hand tools and used to construct such erosion dams. One of the major problems of head-cut erosion is meadow drying. As the streambed is lowered significantly, the subsoil water level in the meadow also goes deeper, which can have countless serious impacts on the meadow ecosystem, from soil chemistry and biology to plant life to impacts on the many animals that use the meadow.



Coville's groundsmoke

CALLING A BOOK!

PLEASE COME HOME. I MISS YOU TERRIBLY; YOU WERE SUCH A GOOD FRIEND.

LOVE, HEATHER

(The book, *Wilderness Forever*: Howard Zahniser and the Path to the Wilderness Act of 1964 by Mark Harvey was borrowed from Heather Anderson and she would greatly appreciate its return. 681-6304 or heather.anderson8@comcast.net or bring it to a meeting.)

Climate Ride, from page 1

portation causes. My chosen beneficiary was The Solar Living Institute, whose mission is to promote sustainable living through inspirational environmental education.

Overall, the 2011 California ride raised more than \$275,000 for the beneficiaries. Each rider had to raise a minimum of \$2,400 to participate in this fully supported ride. I was honored to receive a donation from the Tehipite Chapter, which I proudly represented on Day 3.

But this was not just any benefit cycling event. This was a ride of perseverance in the face of a tremendous climatic adversary: the unseasonably strong series of Pacific storms that rolled through Northern California that week. It took the true grit of the amazing riders, the organizers and the event staff to keep going, even after hours and hours of cycling, sleeping, eating and repairing flat tires and broken spokes in downpour after downpour.



Tom Cotter descending Leggett Hill in a freezing rain

The misfortune of the weather, however, brought out a different feeling from what would have normally been a beautiful, though still difficult and hilly, cycling trip through the Humboldt Redwoods, along the Mendocino coast, up the Russian River and through part of the Sonoma Wine Country, and the along the dramatic Marin cliff-side vistas eventually crossing the Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco.

The misfortune brought out the tenacity, collegiality and toughness of a group of cyclists from all around the country who each came with their own level of cycling abilities. Some had just start-

Great

San Joaquin River Clean-up

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

ed riding two months ago, and others had been riding for more than 40 years. We were all there because we believed in the cause to better our world by advocating for more progress in clean alternative transportation, for clean alternative energy, for sustainable living and agricultural practices. We were not about to let the climate, of all things, put a damper on our spirit and cause us to give in. Instead, I believe we were motivated even more to continue our mission.

We were scientists, consultants, teachers, professional musicians, environmentalists, clergy, Olympic and world champion cyclists, architects, retirees, engineers, counselors, software engineers, geologists (yours truly), friends, parents and leaders — all there believing that we can capitalize on the human spirit to change our ways to work better with our planet, not against it.

With the cheering section cries of “Climate” (from the front of the pack) “Ride” (from the back of the pack) we rode (following traffic laws) to the Civic Center, where we were greeted by family, friends, and local politicians and dignitaries. We, the California Climate Ride “Storm Riders” of 2011, had made it known that we will not give up, that we are tough and resilient, and that we will do what is right to benefit all, not just some, of society as we progress toward a sustainable, environmentally friendly and healthy existence for us on Planet Earth.



Team Real Goods Solar - Melissa Jean Watson, Jennifer Brantley and Tom Cotter (team captain)

With Marian Orvis

My, my how time does fly. “Time flies like an eagle, fruit flies like bananas.” Groucho Marx

Anyway, let’s look at some salient sillies.

iKINI: That’s the name a NY-based designer has given to his invention: a solar-powered bikini so wearers can charge their iPod or camera as they lie in the sun.

A. Schneider sewed together 40 paper-thin photo-voltaic panels together with soft conductive thread to produce his iKini, which comes complete with USB ports sewn into the fabric. They sell for a minimum of \$500 each. (Ya think if we ordered lots of them, we’d get a discount?)

CHOICES: If we didn’t enrich big oil companies by giving them \$3.5 billion in tax breaks this year, we could have increased Pell grants for each college student by \$360 and \$655,000 for each college on average.

POPLAR IS POPULAR: Scientists are reporting that leaf buds of poplar trees are an excellent source of antioxidants, the anti-aging ingredients in skin creams. They noted in an American Chemical Society pamphlet that there’s a long history of using poplar buds to treat colds, sinusitis, sunburn and arthritis. They found that the buds also demonstrated anti-aging effects on cells in the lab, sufficient to be utilized in cosmetic formulations.

DIGITAL SOUL: More than a quarter of a million Facebook users will die this year alone. But thanks to cheap storage and easy copying, their “digital souls” have the potential to be truly immortal. What do you want to leave behind?

Gee, I’m sorry we couldn’t order any of these: To mark the royal wedding, British brewers created the world’s first beer laced with Viagra. Downing just three bottles of Royal Virility

Performance is equivalent to taking one of the blue pills according to makers BrewDog. The 7.5% India Pale Ale also contains extra aphrodisiacs including Horny Goat Weed

and even chocolate. All proceeds go to charity, of course.

WHAT NEXT? People should stop calling their animals “pets” because it’s insulting according to leading academics. They should instead be called “companion animals” while owners should be known as “human care.” The call came from the Journal of Animal Ethics, a new academic publication. In its first editorial, the J also condemns the use of terms such as “critters, beasts, and even wildlife” because it suggests “uncivilized.”

Desert, from page 1

earth. It now serves no ‘purpose’ and is quite ‘useless’—useless to man, who still cherishes the idea that the world was made exclusively for him. But Nature works alike for the animate and the inanimate. The Colorado is one of her best cutting instruments. She is using the River to grind and carry away the rock of the Plateau Country. She is laying it down in beds of sand and silt in the Gulf of California, and in the fullness of time she will heave it up into a new plateau for use in a new world era. Is that not more important than being a present trunk sewer for foul cities, a fetch and carry for mere man?”

Things have changed on the Colorado since 1920. Van Dyke was probably aware of planning leading to the Colorado River Compact, finalized in 1922 to divide the water rights among seven southwestern states. To be sure, there are still no large cities built next to it, but large cities now drink much of it, and most of the rest is used for irrigation—much to the detriment of the once rich delta on the Gulf of California discussed so eloquently by Aldo Leopold in *A Sand County Almanac*. The first dam built on the Colorado is the Hoover (completed 1936), impounding Lake Mead. The Hoover is on the border between Arizona and Utah, with most of the lake in Utah. The second is the Parker, which impounds Lake Havasu (completed 1938), on the border between California and Arizona. The last dam built on the Colorado is Edward Abbey’s favorite the Glen Canyon, completed after ten years work in 1966. (Abbey’s work is where I discovered Van Dyke.)

Van Dyke was prescient. Of the desert itself Van Dyke wrote in 1903 in *The Desert: Further Studies in Natural Appearances*:

“To speak about sparing anything because it is beautiful is to waste one’s breath and incur ridicule in the bargain. The aesthetic sense—the power to enjoy through the eye, the ear, and the imagination—is just as important a factor

in the scheme of human happiness as the corporeal sense of eating and drinking; but there has never been a time when the world would admit it. The ‘practical men,’ who seem forever on the throne, know very well that beauty is only meant for lovers and young persons—stuff to suckle fools withal. The main affair of life is to get the dollar, and if there is any money in cutting the throat of Beauty, why, by all means, cut her throat. That is what the ‘practical men’ have been doing ever since the world began. It is not necessary to dig up ancient history; for have we not seen, here in California and Oregon, in our own time, the destruction of the fairest valleys the sun ever shone upon by placer and hydraulic mining?

“Have we not seen in Minnesota and Wisconsin the mightiest forests that ever raised head to the sky slashed to pieces by the axe and turned into a waste of tree-stumps and fallen timber? Have we not seen the Upper Mississippi, by the destruction of the forests, changed from a broad, majestic river into a shallow, muddy stream; and the beautiful prairies of Dakota turned under by the plough and then allowed to run to weeds? Men must have coal though they ruin the valleys and blacken the streams of Pennsylvania, they must have oil though they disfigure half of Ohio and Indiana, they must have copper if they wreck all the mountains of Montana and Arizona, and they must have gold though they blow Alaska into the Behring Sea. It is more than possible that the ‘practical men’ have gained much practice and many dollars by flaying the fair face of these United States. They have stripped the land of its robes of beauty, and what have they given in its place? Weeds, wire fences, oil-derricks, board shanties and board towns—things that not even a ‘practical man’ can do less than curse at.

“And at last they have turned to the desert! It remains to be seen what they will do with it. Reclaiming a waste may not be so easy as breaking a prairie or cutting down a forest. And Nature will not always be driven from her purpose. Wind, sand, and heat on Sahara have proven hard forces to fight against; they may prove no less potent on the Colorado. And sooner or later Nature will surely come to her own again. Nothing human is of long duration. Men and their deeds are obliterated, the race itself fades; but Nature goes calmly on with her projects. She works not for man’s enjoyment, but for her own satisfaction and her own glory. She made the fat lands of the earth with all their fruits and flowers and foliage; and with no less care she made the desert with its sands and cacti. She intended that each

See Desert, page 8

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

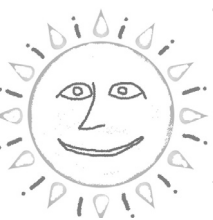
Our Tehipite Chapter Outings Chair is Marcia Rasmussen, Marcia@BigBaldy.com, 559-332-2419. Please contact Marcia with any questions concerning our outings program. Contact the trip leader directly if you are interested in one of the listed trips.

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.

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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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.

Sunday, November 27, 2011 - 10:00am

Leader: Marcia Rasmussen

Day Hike Rating: Easy 4.00 miles

Explore the beautiful San Joaquin River Gorge, part of which has recently been recommended by the BLM for "Wild and Scenic" designation. We will hike the section of trail downriver from the power plant, with moderate ups and downs. Bring lunch to eat on the trail. Call for meeting place or more information.

Contact: Marcia Rasmussen (559) 332-2419

Saturday, December 10, 2011 - 8:00am

Leader: Steve Fretz

Rating: Easy 5.00 miles Elevation Gain: 500 feet

Easy cross-country ski and snowshoe at Tamarack Ridge, off Hwy. 168. Call for more information.

Contact: Steve Fretz, (559) 439-6673

Saturday, January 14, 2012 - 8:00am

Leader: Steve Fretz

Type: Cross Country Ski Rating: Intermediate Distance: 8.00 miles

Elevation Gain: 1,000 feet

Intermediate cross-country ski to Buck Rock in Giant Sequoia National Monument. Call for details.

Contact: Steve Fretz, (559) 439-6673

Sunday, February 5, 2012

Leader: Karen Hammer

Type: Snowshoe hike Rating: Easy Distance: 5.00 miles

Superbowl Sunday Snowshoe hike for beginners who would like an introduction to the sport or for experienced snowshoers just looking to get out for part of the day. We will start at Coyote Nordic Trailhead in the Sierra National Forest off highway 168 and follow the Eagle Trail to the Shaver Lake Vista. The level of difficulty involved in snowshoeing is always dependent on snow conditions, so it is impossible to accurately rate such a trip in advance. If you plan to participate and don't have your own gear you can rent snowshoes (and poles if you like) from REI or Herb Bauer. You will need to pick them up the day before the outing.

Dress in layers and be prepared for wet weather and to add or remove layers of clothing as needed. Please pack 1 - 2 quarts of water, lunch and snacks.

We encourage carpooling. If you drive please be aware that a snow parking permit must be obtained. These can be picked up in Shaver Lake on the way. If you are a passenger please be prepared to reimburse your driver for gas and for the parking permit. Bad road conditions due to snow or ice will result in the trip being cancelled or postponed.

Contact the leader for meeting time and place and to be sure this outing is appropriate for your level of conditioning. Karen Hammer (559)298-5272

Would you like to be an Outings Leader?

Being an Outings Leader can be very rewarding. Basic qualifications include a desire to lead outings, basic first aid or the ability to devote time to getting qualified in first aid, and reading the Sierra Club Outings Leader Handbook. The Tehipite Chapter would like to offer outings to people of all abilities and ages. If you are interested, phone Marcia Rasmussen (559) 332-2419 or email her at Marcia@bigbaldy.com



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Your (members') articles and photos are welcome! Deadline for *Tehipite Topics* is the 15th of each month. Please submit material to wattsvalleypreservation@gmail.com. Want to run an inexpensive ad? Email wattsvalleypreservation@gmail.com

Desert, from page 6

should remain as she made it. When

the locust swarm has passed, the flowers and grasses will return to the valley; when man is gone, the sand and the heat will come back to the desert. The desolation of the kingdom will live again, and down in the Bottom of the Bowl the opalescent mirage will waver skyward on wings of light, serene in its solitude, though no human eye sees nor human tongue speaks its loveliness."

In 1903 John C. Van Dyke had already seen the beginnings of the destruction of the desert of the American Southwest. He was aware of plans of seven southwestern states to divide up the water of the Colorado River so that, as dam designer John S. Eastwood advised in 1914 not a drop should reach the sea. Van Dyke understood the attraction of canyons and water for engineers and bankers that they might "harness it [water], make it turn wheels, generate electricity, or irrigate the earth." He knew of electricity and how water had been harnessed to bring it to the Big City load centers, like San Francisco and Los Angeles. He was quite aware that for that very purpose Big Meadows on the Feather River had been flooded to create Lake Almanor.

Van Dyke did not, however, foresee the land rush to acquire sites in the desert for solar and wind farms—and transmission lines to serve them. He believed the heat and wind would protect the waterless parts of the desert from development and discourage the reclamation of this "waste," a term he used quite ironically. For to him it was no waste; indeed it was a visual feast. Sickly and small though he was, Van Dyke saddled a mule and went without human companion into the desert of the American Southwest to experience the desert in its pristine form before the practical men started to do their damage.

CVAQ Action Day

At 6 AM on August 23, along with many members of local environmental organizations, several Tehipite Chapter activists boarded a bus bound for Sacramento for a Central Valley Air Quality Coalition Action Day. An hour later we stopped in Merced to pick up more volunteers. With a full bus, the next stop Sacramento, at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. Here we met other activists from the more than 70 member organizations belonging to CVAQ, including the Union of Concerned Scientists; California Clean Air Coalition; Fresno Metro Min-



Tehipite Chapter's Gary Lasky and Teresa de Anda of CRPE demonstrate on the steps of the State Capitol.

istries; Central California Latina Network (CCLN); and Center for Race, Poverty, and Environment. It is a racially and economically diverse group. At Westminster Church experienced activists prepared us to go out in teams to visit the offices of legislators and discuss various pending bills related to clean air, global warming, and pesticides. We divided into teams and spent several hours visiting state senate and assembly members' offices. Incidentally, Sierra Club activist Kevin Hall helped found CVAQ.