



Tehipite Topics

February 2010 ❧ Vol. 56, No. 2

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Sierra Club Announces New Executive Director

(San Francisco). Michael Brune, a respected leader whose strategic vision and hard-charging charm have driven a number of important environmental victories, has been named executive director of the Sierra Club, the nation's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.

Brune, 38, takes leadership as the club, founded in 1892 by iconic conservationist John Muir, plunges headlong into the most important environmental battle of the 21st century, notching up dramatic successes against greenhouse gas-polluters and helping create the clean energy future that is the best defense against potentially catastrophic climate disruption. Michael Brune

Brune's alignment with this ambitious mission is reflected in his critically acclaimed book, "Coming Clean – Breaking America's Addiction to Oil and Coal". Published by Sierra Club Books in 2008, the volume details a plan for a new green economy that will create well-paying jobs, promote environmental justice and bolster national security.

"The grassroots volunteers and staff of the Sierra Club have won some of the country's most significant environmental battles" said Brune. "I believe the Sierra Club's best work lies ahead, and I'm excited to be a part of it."

Allison Chin, president of the organization's board of directors, said: "We look forward to the innovative thinking and inspired leadership Michael brings to the Sierra Club at a pivotal moment. The board was particularly impressed by Michael's credentials working with volunteers and his proven talent for bending the will of powerful adversaries without breaking the bonds of civility that keep them at the table."

Brune holds degrees in Economics and Finance from West Chester University in Pennsylvania, and comes to the Sierra Club from the Rainforest Action Network, where in his seven years as executive director he earned a reputation for using bold but respectful confrontation to encourage corporate responsibility. At age 26, he led a historic consumer-education campaign that ultimately persuaded Home Depot to stop selling wood from endangered forests. Time magazine called that victory "the top environmental story of 1999." Under Brune's leadership, Rainforest Action Network went on to win more than a dozen

other key commitments from America's largest corporations, including Citi, Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, Kinko's, Boise, and Lowe's.



New Executive Director
Michael Brune

Like most Sierra Club activists, Brune has his roots in the outdoors. He learned to walk at a campground in Maine, and says he grasped the importance of protecting the natural world as a teenager, when hypodermic needles and chemical pollution washed up on the shore near his New Jersey home, closing beaches and keeping him from the waves he'd grown up body surfing. He and his wife, Mary, attribute their ongoing passion for environmental activism in part to concern that their outdoors-loving children, Olivia, five and Sebastian, one, inherit a healthy world. He is particularly interested in promoting programs that link the Club's traditional protection of wild places, including National Parks, to urgently needed climate change solutions.

As the Sierra Club's 6th executive director, Brune assumes a position formerly held by such legendary environmentalists as David Brower and Michael McCloskey. He succeeds Carl Pope, who, since taking leadership of the Club in 1992, has steadily increased its political clout and intellectual heft while building an influential base of more than 1.4 million members and supporters in all 50 states. Pope will maintain his 37-year tenure with the Club in the role of executive chairman, continuing to help shape Club strategy and collaborating with Brune, Chin and chapter leaders to connect the Club with policy makers, the media, other non-profits and donors.

"I am thrilled that someone with Mike's leadership, passion and creativity is taking up the torch to lead the Sierra Club as it faces the next generation of environmental challenges. The Club is fortunate to have him as our next leader," said Carl Pope.

"I am humbled and inspired to follow Carl Pope in this position," said Brune. "In no small measure because of Carl, the Sierra Club, with its extraordinary history of success and commitment to grassroots-driven programs that promote positive and pragmatic solutions, is uniquely positioned to lead our country to the clean energy future it needs and deserves."

Chapter Meetings

February General Meeting: The Central California Water Crisis

February 17 at 7 PM, 550 E. Shaw Ave, Fresno
(Across from Fashion Fair Mall)

Two Speakers:

Dr. David Cehrs

Registered Hydrologist and Certified Hydrogeologist

**“Unsustainable Water Demand:
A Central California Example”**

David Orth

General Manager Kings River Conservation District

**“Water, Water Law, and Water Politics
in the San Joaquin Valley.”**

**A Question and Answer Period
Will Follow the Presentations**

There will be no general meeting in March. The April 21 program will be ENVIRONMENTAL MOVIE NIGHT and celebration of birthdays: John Muir and Earth Day.

Conservation & Executive Committee Meetings

Wednesday, February 10, at 7:00 P.M.
University of California Center, 550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno



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Conservation and Executive Committee Meetings

Thursday, February 4
Rod Webster's home, 7:00 P.M.
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 Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 7 P.M.
Sierra Presbyterian Church, 3603 "M" St.
(Yosemite Ave and M, across from Merced College)

"Issues of Dam Relicensing Along the Merced River"
Ron Stork, Friends of the River

Merced Irrigation District's Dams along the Merced River are up for relicensing with the Federal regulatory commission. One key issue is determining the scope of the process. Should it be limited to only Lake McClure and its immediate environs, should it extend further down the length of the Merced River, or should it be considered in the context of the larger water system which includes the San Joaquin Delta and its other feeders. Two key passions drive the discussion. One is that of protecting and restoring riparian habitat and native fish populations. The other is insuring an adequate water supply for agriculture and the repercussions there for the local economy and job market. Both of course are intensified by four consecutive years of drought. These kinds of issues surrounding our local

water system and its future mirror the same concerns that continue to swirl around the San Joaquin River Restoration effort to the south and the Delta controversy to the north. Come learn more about this important component of our local water conundrum.

Whose Water Is It?

By Jean Hays

SF CHRONICLE EXPOSES ALARMING ELEMENT OF CA WATER BOND: An article in the San Francisco Chronicle brought attention to a small, little-noticed section of the \$11.1 billion water bond act passed by the California legislature in a special November session. The bond act will go before voters in November, 2010. The provision, according to the Chronicle article, "specifically allows for the creation of joint power authorities." These authorities "may include in their membership governmental and nongovernmental partners that are not located within their respective hydrologic regions in financing the surface storage projects." These governmental and nongovernmental authorities "would own, govern, manage and operate a surface storage project."

The issue, of course, is that this provision amounts to an allowance for water privatization with the potential to bring massive profits to select individuals at the expense of the public good. Lawmakers have said that the intention of the language is to provide flexibility for funding of the projects, and that the strict public benefits criteria and review processes should prevent any abuse of the provision. "Every dollar, every public dollar, will be spent on a public benefit," said Senate President Pro Tem Darell Steinberg.

See "Whose Water" page 5



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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Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

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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

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Central Valley Water Forum

Facts Vs. Fiction

March 13, 9 A.M.-4:00 P.M.

Fresno City College

Agenda:

Registration and coffee/tea

Introductory Remarks - Mark Arax

Plenary:

Is Our Water Supply Sustainable? - David Cehrs

Water Law: Whose Water Is It? - Lloyd Carter

Facts About the Delta: Can It Be Restored?

Barbara Barrigan-Parilla, Restore the Delta

What Ecological Issues Result from Our Water Crisis? - Dan Bacher

Should We Worry About Our Water Quality?

Community Water Center

Question & Answer Period - All Plenary Panelists

Lunch

Break-Out Sessions:

Our Bodies Our Water: Community Rights to Health vs.

Corporate Rights to Profit - Dr. Nancy Price

Water and Jobs - Dr. Jeffrey Michael

Water and Land Use/Planning - Chris Acree, Revive the San Joaquin

Where Our Water Is Going - Walt Shubin

Water Conservation - City of Fresno Staff

Break

Break-Out Sessions - Participants Second Choice of Topics Listed

Above

Pro and Con Presentation of Water Bond Ballot Initiative

One legislator and one environmentalist will represent each side of the issues

That’s what the bond says and that’s what the state water commission will be charged with assuring.”

The way the arrangement would work is that taxpayers would pay for a proportion of a storage project determined by the value of the public benefits created by the project, i.e. flood control, recreation, ecosystem restoration, etc. This money would be given to the private entity, which would then be responsible for the remainder of costs associated with building the storage facility. Any profits generated from this investment would be the private entity’s.

On 2 January, the California Water Impact Network (C-WIN) also published an article about four troublesome amendments to the so-called “Monterey Agreement” governing California water policy, which it believes must be overturned to avoid the privatization of California water resources and water infrastructure. The now notorious story of the Kern Water Bank’s conversion from a public resource to a profit machine for billionaire Stuart Resnick serves as a cautionary tale in the article. Specifically, the four amendments that C-WIN believes must be overturned are the following:

1. Elimination of Article 18(a). 18(a) established the “Urban Preference,” a safeguard to ensure that “in times of prolonged dry weather, agricultural allocations would be cut first.”
2. Elimination of Article 18(b). 18(b) was meant to ensure that “the total amount of what was promised could actually be delivered.” The difference between what is promised and what can be delivered is called “paper water.” Because of the elimination of 18(b), there are about 2.37 million acre feet of paper water in the California system, which is extremely dangerous because it allows developments to be approved where in reality there is insufficient water. “Reinstating Article 18(b) would mean that the Department of Water Resources (DWR)

could reduce the overall project contracts to what water the Department can actually deliver.”

3. Kern Water Bank Given Away by State. “As part of the Monterey Agreement, the DWR (Department of Water Resources) turned over a state asset, the Kern Water Bank (a 20,000-acre alluvial fan) to the Kern County Water Agency in exchange for the retirement of 45,000 acre-feet of paper water.” This privatization allowed private corporations, most notably Resnick’s Paramount Farm, to buy surplus water from the SF Bay Delta, store it in the aquifer, and later sell it to the highest bidder, making millions of dollars off a public resource. C-WIN recommends that the Kern Water Bank be returned to the DWR to be “used in dry times to fulfill the urban preference,” which C-WIN also recommends be reinstated.

4. Lastly, Article 21 “enables state water contractors -- particularly those in the southern San Joaquin Valley and those under the umbrella of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California -- to make much greater use of surplus water in the State Water Project.” This availability of cheap surplus water led to unprecedented levels of pumping during the wet years of the 2000’s, which ultimately caused ecologic collapse in the Delta ecosystem.

While California lawmakers struggle to craft policies that will allow for efficient use and transfer of water in the Central Valley and beyond without compromising the Delta ecosystem or the public trust, the lucrative sales of water resources continue. On 29 December, the Fresno Bee announced that “another farmer may be selling his irrigation water supply to Southern California for millions of dollars.” The Irvine Ranch Water District, which serves a population of 330,000 in Southern California, has proposed to buy access to 1,700 acre feet of water for the reported price of \$14.3 million from the Dudley Ridge Water District in Kings County, CA.

Let’s put the California Symbol back in California

Find out how to reintroduce the grizzly in the Bear Flag state

JLutz@BMCTOTALCARE.COM



Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

**May 7-9; Jul 16-19; Aug 6-9;
Sep 10-12**

CA’s Channel Islands are Galapagos USA! Marvel at the sight of whales, seals, sea lions, rare birds & blazing wildflowers. Hike the wild, windswept trails. Kayak the rugged coastline. Snorkel in pristine waters. Discover remnants of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or just relax at sea. These 3 & 4-day “live aboard” fundraiser cruises benefit Sierra Club’s political program in California & depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68’ Truth. The fee (\$590 for May and Sep; \$785 for Jul & Aug) includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks & beverages, plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to lead hikes on each island and point out interesting features.

To make a reservation mail a \$100 check payable to Sierra Club to leaders: Joan Jones Holtz & Don Holtz, 11826 The Wye St, El Monte, CA 91732. Contact leaders for more information (626-443-0706; jholtzhln@aol.com)



HIKING THE FRENCH PYRENEES

by Heather Anderson

It rains daily among the Pyrenean peaks, but it took me four of our four hiking days to learn that. And it doesn't just sprinkle; it comes down in torrents. I was visiting my Spanish daughter and 4-year-old grandson, and we were staying just over the border at a French equestrian farm. Hiking up a rocky trail, the morning started sunny and inspiring with grassy, treeless heights above and a winding stream far below. There were only a few scattered, billowing clouds of varying shades of gray floating innocently by. We ate our bread and cheese by a peaceful lake, which was a perfect mirror for the lush green vegetation across from us. Then, a few wet drops first gave notice that those billowy clouds had rapidly escalated into a full-blown storm with muddy trail and all. Donning our slickers, we continued slogging downhill over slippery rocks. All the while, my grandson and his mother were happily singing Gene Kelley's famous "Singing in the Rain." Later, the child announced that it was the most memorable experience of his entire holiday.

This entire Catalan-Pyrenean area is only about thirty minutes from the largest ski resort I have ever seen, with at least twenty-five lifts of various size and structure on the mountain tops. On another day we, however, drove downhill to Dorres, base for a hilltop chapel, and home of Roman hot spring baths. Dorres is a typical mountain village, formerly of traditional stone cutters, perhaps dating from the 1700's. Except for a small, unobtrusive new housing development on the edge of town, the old stone homes and stores about the narrow winding streets. Only a few homes have been modernized and landscaped. They all encircle the stone

church. This warm sunny day, we took the trail out of town to ascend a hill, on top of which sat the Bulloc Chapel. Wildflowers decked our trail and our budding child biologist stopped to examine almost every caterpillar, butterfly, beetle, and lizard along the way. We lunched on the hill top and viewed the towering peaks across the valley, and the small neatly marked farms below us. Bulloc Chapel was a simple stone structure built in the 18th century. It was a lovely light day with the gentle breeze turning the dry grassy hillside into waves as we descended. We reached our car just as the first rain drop hit. Again, the single drop rapidly became a raging downpour. We made our way to the open-air baths and enjoyed the cold drops splattering down on us in our warm bath.

Saving the Earth through Art

By Heather Anderson

Have you ever thought about visual art as inspiration for more interest in the environment? For example, Walkin' Jim Stoltz wrote a song called "Saving the Earth, One Song at a Time." Artists (painters, print-makers, photographers) have also celebrated our natural environment with art. Ansel Adams is perhaps one of the best known of these to capture the beauty of wild nature as something to cherish and protect. Most folks can understand realistic, beautiful black and white photographs, and his coffee-table books have enriched our lives, urging us to look closely at nature, and visit national parks and wilderness.

My quest for an art education that teaches about the environment through art began with Alan Gussow, artist and environmental advocate, who testified in legislative hearings, daring to put a dollar value on the aesthetics of a natural landscape. Later, he organized an exhibition (sponsored by the Sierra Club) of paintings by artists who had an intense feeling for the land. His follow-up book, *A Sense of Place, the Artist and the American Land* (1972), the first of its kind to link painting with the environment, started me on a forty-year effort to share a passion for our land with fellow art teachers, helping them teach about our natural environ-

ment through art (Ph.D. dissertation, 1984). Since the Paleolithic cave painters, artists have been inspired by nature. Post Impressionist, Paul Cezanne once said that painters should dedicate themselves entirely to a study of nature and try to produce pictures for teaching. Two World War II abstract painter émigrés were German born Hans Hofmann and Armenian Arshile Gorky. Hofmann felt he brought the landscapes home in his mind, while Gorky stated that he did not paint in front of, but from within nature.

Unlike Walkin' Jim, a member of Musicians United to Sustain the Environment (M.U.S.E.), I have not hit the road with a car full of paintings, nor have I even founded and raised money for a volunteer, non-profit organization, or staged a gallery exhibit to excite an audience of thousands with free events and media outreach. I have only made a few paintings, held a few exhibits dedicated to wilderness in series' like Mountains, Glaciers, Rivers, and National Parks. I have also worked at a local river park with public school classes through our San Joaquin River Parkway Trust. Students learned about the river, its Native American history, its flora and fauna, and then drew and painted on-site until time to board the bus back to school. My quiet quest as artist-educator-environmentalist has not yet garnered many environmental enthusiasts.

Do environmentalists appreciate visual art? I have watched them walk right by artwork, even though the subject matter may depict the very mountains with which they are most familiar, and have hiked and climbed. The viewers, however, are not at fault, since they probably have had little art education and experience looking at, or appreciating two-dimensional artworks. We build a museum every other week in our country, but fail to educate our students in the arts. Art seems not to be in the vocabulary of our environmental movement.

The arts are not valued. At Berkeley in the forties, sciences were taught in a three-story, well equipped concrete building, art in WWI wooden barracks. Current thought touts more and better science and math education, not arts education. Recently, I read that Brandeis University is closing their art museum and selling its collection. What would happen if they announced the closing of their sports program? Public education today is largely cognitive, not visual. If

See "Art" page 7

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 Co-Chairs are Dave Wallace at wagga@comcast.net and Steve Cosner at stevec@sfsu.edu. Please contact them 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.

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.



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 Metropoulous, and Annie Pham do a terrific job, and they need our help. Please go to the terrific Sierra Club California web site at www.sierraclubcalifornia.org and donate generously.

February 13, Saturday

Snowshoe Hike (2B) Crabtree Road Area, Emigrant Wilderness (Yokuts)

We'll start at the far end of Crabtree Road not far from Dodge Ridge, park where the snow cuts off the road and follow nordic ski trails on and off the road. There will be a couple of steep climbs at elevations of about 7,000+feet. 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 . Co-leader TBA

February 21 - Sunday

Snowshoe from Coyote Trailhead (1A or 2A)

Conditions will determine whether we follow Eagle Trail or Coyote Loop trail. Poor conditions will result in trip postponement to the following Sunday.

Karen Hammer (559) 298-5272

February 24, Wednesday

Yokuts Sierra Club Potluck and Movie Night

In their latest film, "The Yes Men Fix the World", Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno pose as executives of giant corporations and lie their way into business and press conferences. Their hilarious pranks expose how corporate greed is destroying the planet. Potluck begins at 6 pm, the movie will begin at 6:45 pm. Contact host Elaine Gorman, 209.524.7630 or goford@sbcglobal.net, for address/directions.

"Art" from page 6

children are to become visually aware adults sensitive to their natural environment, they must first learn to see it. It has been said that if you haven't learned to draw, it is because you haven't learned to see. Seeing and art go together. It is through the arts that we may come to understand the beauty and wonder of the universe.

We hope for change. President Obama has already drafted the first-ever cultural arts platform, creating an Artists Corps, increasing funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, and publicly championing arts education. Robert Capanna, director

of Settlement Music School, the nation's largest community arts education institution, remarked that creativity and innovation are key to our country's future competitiveness. Although the country faces serious challenges, he said, "the arts can be part of the solution." Part of the environmental solution? Artists, musicians, and writers like to think so.





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Deadline for *Tehipite Topics* is the second Friday of each month. Please submit material to TehipiteTopics@gmail.com

Letter from Former Chair

Dear Editor:

The Sierra Club and other environmental groups should be very proud of all they have done over the past century. Protecting wild places, adding to parklands and fighting to protect wildlife have been very successful campaigns. What if all this is now at risk because of Global Climate Change? What if the effects of increased temperature a few decades from now wipe out much of our progress? Increased fires, loss of species, rampant desertification, coral die-off from acidification of the oceans not only could occur, indeed all this is starting to happen

now. Future projections show a worsening picture lies ahead.

Almost all credible scientists agree that if we don't act now, we may lose much of what we love in the natural world. So what is the club doing about this crisis? This past September I was privileged to serve as a hike leader for a conference in Sequoia National Park of the Sierra Club Advanced National Council. This group of long time club members met to discuss the extent of the problems and what we should be doing to help slow or stop the degradation. We heard from park officials, biologists and long time members. The club has decided to make this

battle a top priority. Some of the programs include habitat protection, green energy production, conservation of energy and reducing coal power. The challenge is the biggest we have ever faced, but it wasn't all conferences and doom and gloom. As usual we tried to combine work with outdoor activities. Imagine walking among the biggest living things on earth, 5:00 am star gazing, exploring Crystal Cave and sharing food and conversation with concerned members. I can't imagine the Earth without a Sierra Club.

John Flaherty