

Tehipite Topics

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Proposition 16

PG&E'S ATTACK ON COMPETITION

By John Rizzo, Bay Chapter

PG&E wants you to vote for a constitutional amendment that would make it tougher for you to buy cleaner electricity from someone else.

The company is the sole sponsor of Proposition 16, a measure on the June ballot that would require two-thirds voter approval before cities, counties, and local power agencies could choose an alternative energy provider. The measure would also prevent existing local utilities, such as City of Alameda, Sacramento, and Silicon Valley Power in Santa Clara, from adding new customers, even within their districts, without first going to the ballot. Although PG&E refers to the measure as "The Taxpayers' Right to Vote Act", the measure provides no right to vote on PG&E expansion efforts or on its rates, among the highest in the country.

Former California energy commissioner John Geesman points out the inherent unfairness of the measure. In his blog he notes that while PG&E has a \$30 million budget for the campaign, "the local governments, municipal utilities, and irrigation districts who are its targets are prohibited by law from spending anything to oppose it."

PG&E is also targeting so-called Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) programs, such as San Francisco's CleanPowerSF and Marin Clean Energy. These ambitious programs will soon provide half of the counties' electricity from renewable sources - if Proposition 16 doesn't enable PG&E to kill the programs by forcing them to the

ballot and winning over a mere 34% of the voters.

This threat has not escaped the leadership of the state legislature. Last December, eight state senators, led by President Pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg, wrote to PG&E CEO Peter Darbee to voice concerns over PG&E's attack on the CCAs and clean energy: "We note that PG&E . . . today provides less renewable power as a percentage of total sales than it did when this legislation was enacted in 2000. . . . It

New!

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is unacceptable for a company that is falling behind in meeting state-adopted goals for clean energy to impede the efforts of others who would attain those goals through innovative means."

PG&E has all but admitted that squelching competition is the main thrust behind Proposition 16. Last October, speaking about the ballot measure, PG&E CEO Darbee told analysts, "We are going to stand up and resist efforts to take over our customers."

With a near-monopoly stretching from Eureka to Santa Barbara, PG&E's only competition is from isolated local agencies and the few new Community Choice Aggregation programs. But Los Angeles Times columnist Michael Hiltzik believes

See "Prop 16" page 6



Earth First! banner displayed at Jesse Morrow Mountain

Part 1: Cemex Celebrates Earth Day at Wahallich

By Chip Ashley

"Earth doesn't belong to us; we belong to Earth." I have seen this quote attributed to Chief Seattle, but I do not know if he said it. It doesn't matter. It is still true.

Earth Day, April 22, 2010. The 40th anniversary of Earth Day. I drive to Wahallich—Jesse Morrow Mountain—this morning. Wahallich is the Choinumni name for Jesse Morrow. I prefer Wahallich because the Choinumni called it that for at least 10,000 years.

Cemex and a group identifying itself as the Economic Development Corporation serving Fresno County are going to tell us all why they should turn Wahallich into aggregate.

It was a drizzly morning, cool but not cold. The drive through the foothill is pleasant. As I drive through Minkler and then turn east on CA 180, the mountain Wahallich stands out green and rocky before me wearing a crown of soft gray clouds, a goddess celebrating the rites of spring, sacred to an ancient culture lost to memory.

The gate to the site is blocked by a knot of cars and people. I see some Earth First! folks I know. Maybe they are causing a little trouble—holding things up.

A gatekeeper in a faded cap asks me to roll down my window; he checks my name off a list. A couple of cars move out of my way, and I start up the muddy graveled drive—

See "Cemex" page 6

Chapter Meetings

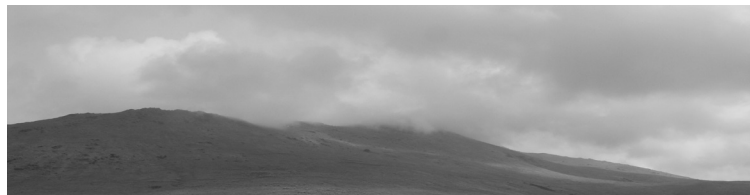
General Meeting

University of California Center, 550 E.
Shaw Ave., Fresno
No General Meeting in May.

The next general meeting will be
June 16th at 7 P.M.
Topic to be announced



Photo of Mt. Whitney by User: Geographerfrom Wikimedia



Wahallich (Jesse Morrow Mt.), Earth Day 2010 by Chip Ashley

Conservation & Executive Committee Meetings May 12th

The Conservation Committee meets at 7 PM

The Executive Committee meets at 8 PM

University of California Center
550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno



Tehipite Chapter
of the Sierra Club
P.O. Box 5396
Fresno, California 93755-5396

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Chapter phone (559) 229-4031
Web www.tehipite.sierraclub.org

Officers

Chapter Chair

Jeremy Clar (559) 681-0517
..... jclar440@gmail.com

Chapter Vice-Chair

Gary Lasky (559) 790-3495
..... data.nation@earthlink.net

Chapter Secretary

Richard Kangas (559) 896-5337
..... rkangas02@comcast.net

Chapter Treasurer

Wayne Dill
..... wd@whcpafirm.com

Executive Committee Members

Chip Ashley (559) 855-6376
..... watsvalleypreservation@gmail.com
David Cehrs (559) 875-9495
..... dcehrs@Juno.com
Brian Cohen (559) 227-6028
..... afgetsalocal1@yahoo.com
Richard Kangas (559) 896-5337
..... rkangas02@comcast.net

Ron Mackie (559) 683-0293
..... rmackie@sierratel.com
John Rasmussen (559) 332-2419
..... John@BigBaldy.com

Merced Group Appointee:

JoAnne Armstrong (209) 726-0636
..... jo_clarke@att.net

Council of Club Leaders ExComm
JoAnne Clarke (209) 726-0636

Council of Club Leaders Delegate
Jeremy Clar (559) 681-0517

Chapter Committee Chairs

Honors & Awards

Heather Anderson (559) 434-2510
..... heather.anderson8@comcast.net

Hospitality

John Flaherty (209) 742-4668

Tehipite Topics Editors

Chip Ashley (559) 855-6376
..... TehipiteTopics@gmail.com

Tehipite Topics Website Editor

John Rasmussen (559) 332-2419
..... John @BigBaldy.com

Membership/Hospitality

Rae Marx (559) 641-7589

Membership/Newsletter Distribution

Marian Orvis (559) 226-0145

Outings and Outings Leader Training

Marcia Rasmussen Marcia@bigbaldy.com
..... (559) 332-2419

Political Committee

William Fjellbo (559) 642-4511

Programs

Heather Anderson (559) 434-2510

Conservation Committee

Conservation Chair

Heather Anderson (559) 434-2510

Energy, Global Warming, Air Quality,

Population

Chip Ashley (559) 855-6376
..... watsvalleypreservation@gmail.com

Sprawl

John Honnette jhonnette@aol.com

Kings Canyon National Park / Giant Sequoia National Monument / Sequoia Forest

John Rasmussen (559) 332-2419
..... John@BigBaldy.com

Sierra National Forest

Richard Kangas (559) 896-5337
..... rkangas02@comcast.net

Water, Kings River

David Cehrs (559) 875-9495
..... dcehrs@Juno.com

San Joaquin River

Chris Acree (559) 709-4913

Wilderness/Desert

Ron Mackie (559) 683-0293
..... rmackie@sierratel.com

Yosemite National Park

George Whitmore (559) 229-5808
..... geowhit1954@comcast.net

CNRCC Delegate

Heather Anderson (559) 434-2510
Chip Ashley (559) 855-6376

CNRCC Alternates

Richard Kangas (559) 896-5337
Brian Cohen (559) 227-6028

Publicity

Karen Hammer (559) 298-5272
..... ecuagirl45@yahoo.com

Merced Group

Merced Group

Sierra Club
Box 387
Merced, CA 95341

Group Chair

Rod Webster (209) 723-4747
. rwebster@elite.net

Group Vice-Chair

Jon Hawthorne (209)723-5152

Group Treasurer

JoAnne Clarke (209) 726-0636

Group Secretary

Annette Allsup (209) 723-5152

Member-at-Large

Jule Biesiada juleb13@sbcglobal.net

Conservation Chair

JoAnne Clarke (209) 726-0636
. Jo_Clarke@att.net

Publications

Annette Allsup (209) 723-5152

Agriculture

Charlie Magnuson . . (209) 394-7045

Membership open

Publicity

Rod Webster (209) 723-4747

Population

. open

Conservation and Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 6, 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 Meeting

General Meetings are usually the third Thursday of each month

This month we'll get together for a picnic instead (see item below).

Normal evening meetings resume on June 17th at 7:00 P.M.

Annual Picnic, Saturday, May 15th

Instead of our normal general meeting on the third Thursday. Please come and share lunch at Jean Okuye's home in the midst the almond orchards of Livingston.

Jean's straw bale construction home has many green features that make it an interesting destination in and of itself.

Bring a potluck item to share- main course, salad, appetizer, or dessert--somehow it always seems to work out. Also bring silverware, plate, and if you can a lawn chair. Ice tea and water provided but feel free to bring other choices too.

Directions to 10181 W. Olive Ave., Livingston, just west of Cressey Way:

From Merced go north on 99 to Sultana/Liberty offramp, bear right onto Liberty about 1/2 mile to 4-way stop. Left on Cressey Way, which will take you to another 4-way stop at the Sensitive onion/garlic plant (Walnut Ave). Keep going on Olive to next street (1/2 mile), then go left on Olive Ave. over canal, past asphalt driveway on the left to 10181 W. Olive Ave on the left (in the almond orchard is the house.)

From Turlock you can follow the same directions except you will turn left over freeway at Sultana/Liberty as you exit the freeway.

Come as early as 11:00 A.M., we'll eat around noon, leave when you need to, we'll linger no later than 2:00 P.M. or so.

National Bike Month

May is National Bike Month, and in Merced special events are happening every Saturday. The Merced Sierra Club supports the Merced Bicycle Coalition and the UC Merced Cycling Alliance in their efforts to promote both recreational and commuter bicycling in the community.

May 1: Road Ride to Snelling, four levels from beginner to elite.

May 8: Tour of Merced's Bike Paths, family friendly.

May 15: Ride with the Mayor, kicks off bike-to-work week.

May 21 (Friday): Bike-to-Work Day, 3 free energizer stations, T-shirts, drawings and prizes.

May 22: Bicycle Maintenance and Fitting Clinic.

May 29: Bike Path Clean-up / Puncture Vine Removal

Details available at www.mercedbicyclecoalition.org



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 (____) _____
 Email _____

Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!



Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.
 Please charge my: Visa Mastercard AMEX
 Cardholder Name _____
 Card Number _____
 Exp. Date ____/____/____

Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
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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Conservation Forum

A Call for Conservation Activists

By Rich Kangas

Tehipite Chapter NEEDS THE HELP OF PASSIONATE, SINCERE, DEDICATED CONSERVATION ACTIVISTS. This is for the long haul. This is FOR A WIDE RANGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS AND SITUATIONS. This includes air quality, water quality and management, waterways, forestry, wildlife, vegetation, land use planning, federal lands, state lands, natural science, social science, values, economics, law, energy, urban sprawl, transportation, and more. And these include a whole array of subdivisions. Usually environmental activists find multiple such disciplines are involved. So we need EXPERTS from whom we can get correct and sophisticated information. BUT MOSTLY WE NEED HELP TO MAKE SURE IMPORTANT ISSUES GET ADDRESSED. Just about anyone can make a difference.

This is AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, TO LEARN, TO WORK WITH LIKEMINDED PEOPLE, AND TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR HUMAN ENVIRONMENT.

Yes, the human environment includes all those things we value in the natural environment. Environmental laws are written with the IMPACT ON HUMANS in mind. The laws are to require protection of things that help people or are valued by people. THOSE THINGS ARE GREATLY INTERCONNECTED. John Muir (1838-1914), founder and first president of the Sierra Club put it succinctly: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."

Passion is very important for conservation work. Many times we individuals are totally unaware of conservation needs around us. But we can really get fired up once we know something we care about is at risk.

How do we learn about such conservation needs? For me one of the most important sources of information is the newspaper. I got involved with forestry after 1980 when The Fresno Bee gave notice of a Forest Service plan to log Giant Sequoias just north of Grant Grove. I GOT FIRED UP. I started searching and calling and asking. I had al-

ready joined the Sierra Club in 1979. But with this particular interest I started attending Conservation Meetings with likeminded people. They shared expertise and I kept involved to help prevent that logging. And I continue to do what I can. And along the way I have been involved with many projects and worked with some amazingly interesting people. I have been involved with other levels of the Sierra Club and with other environmental organizations.

SO HOW DO YOU GET INVOLVED? IT IS EASY!!!

- (1) Look at the masthead of our newsletter, Tehipite Topics. There you can find the various conservation leaders. Call them. Get involved.
- (2) Join the Tehipite Chapter Conservation Forum (at our Tehipite Chapter website. To do that Click on Email Lists in "Contact Us" box on our website. Then follow directions. Our website is at <http://tehipite.sierraclub.org/>.
- (3) Come to our Conservation Meeting on the second Wednesday of each month. See the listing in Tehipite Topics for meeting time and place.

We really need the help of more of our members. So join us in helping to protect our environment. Then enjoy it on a Chapter Outing. That way you will get a full taste of what it is to be a Sierra Club Activist in the truest tradition promoted by William Edward Colby (1875-1964). In 1901 Colby started the tradition of outings as a means to inform members so they would help to protect our wild lands. He knew that involvement in special places would encourage Sierra Club members to participate in protection of those special places.

Please join Community Water Center and residents from across the San Joaquin Valley to call for clean, safe drinking water now!

By Laurel Firestone

As people across the country celebrate clean, safe drinking water during National Drinking Water Week, Community Water Center (CWC) and community partners are highlighting the many families and residents who still lack this basic human right. CWC

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is calling on Governor Schwarzenegger and San Joaquin Valley Congressional representatives to provide direct emergency funding to communities regularly drinking toxic tap water and work to create long-term solutions to the San Joaquin Valley drinking water crisis. It is time to ensure that no community has to go another day without access to safe water!

Make your voice heard and learn more about the drinking water crisis:

What: Community water tour, press conference and rally, and free water testing

When: Tuesday May 4th 10 – 1

Where: Seville, Tulare County

Highlighting those who are left out: The community water tour of Seville will highlight the many drinking water challenges that small communities like Seville face throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Residents in this small, low-income town regularly receive drinking water with nitrate contamination over legal health limits. The elementary school, one of the poorest in the state, spends between \$5,000 and \$7,200 per year to buy alternative drinking water supplies so they can provide safe water to local children. Old and dilapidated pipes and nitrate contaminated wells are just some of causes of unsafe drinking water in Seville, and in thousands of homes throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

While many communities throughout the valley have been trying for years to secure funding for projects that would help upgrade old infrastructure, install treatment systems, or connect to a new water source, federal and state grant funding continues to bypass the communities that need it most. State grant funds that were appropriated to develop permanent solutions to drinking water problems in the area have remained frozen and federal stimulus funding was granted to areas with more resources to qualify as “shovel ready.” Many communities have lacked access to safe water for more than a decade, and have had applications pending at every state and federal funding agency for much of that time.

On May 4th, CWC and community residents will gather to say enough is enough! We need our representatives to act now to address the immediate public health crisis and create long-term solutions to drinking water

contamination. Read our call to action and sign our petition today! [link to petition site]

You can support this effort by:

- Joining us for a tour of Seville’s water system and see first-hand the struggles of small communities who lack clean, safe drinking water. Stay for the press conference and rally afterwards!
- Bringing water from your home or well to receive free water quality testing.
- Signing our petition calling for funding to address chronic drinking water issues in communities throughout San Joaquin Valley!
- Donating to CWC so we can provide water filters to families impacted by the drinking water crisis! Your donation will help CWC purchase filters and continue our important advocacy and organizing work throughout San Joaquin Valley.
- Spreading the word by forwarding this on to others and encouraging them to join us!

In the Trenches

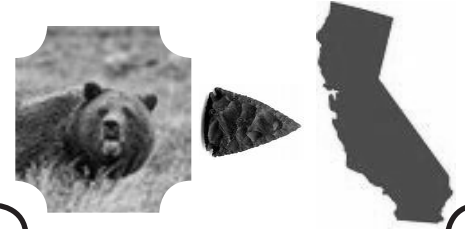


Tehipite Chapter Vice Chair, Gary Lasky talks with reporters near U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein’s Fresno offices.

In April, representatives from Tehipite Chapter’s executive and conservation committees met with staff at the offices of Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer, and Representative Jim Costa to discuss local environmental issues such as water and air quality.

Help put the California Symbol back in the Bear-Flag State

www.californiagrizzly.org
thecaliforniagrizzly.blogspot.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; jholtzhl@aol.com)



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that PG&E has reason to be afraid of these competitors. “Their fear today is that municipal utilities will undercut them on pricing and recruit their customers. That’s not an unrealistic fear, as municipal utilities have consistently beaten the private utilities on rates.”

Municipal utilities and CCAs may not be the only electricity providers wary of Proposition 16’s anti-competitive aims. Neither of the state’s other investor-owned utilities, Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas & Electric, has contributed any funding to the Prop 16 campaign. As of February, PG&E had spent \$6.5 million on the measure. Commissioner Geesman pointed out the source of these funds: us. “There is not a nickel that passes through PG&E’s books that doesn’t ultimately derive from its customers,” he said to the San Jose Mercury News.

PG&E frequently states that switching to its competition is risky. Yet PG&E customers risk getting their lights turned off more than those of other utilities. PG&E is cutting service to a staggering number of customers who are missing payments - far more than other utilities. The Los Angeles Times reported that PG&E’s low-income disconnections jumped 75% in 2009 - five times the increase of San Diego Gas & Electric, and three times that of Southern California Edison. PG&E’s overall disconnections rose 40%, also more than any other investor-owned or municipal utility.

Despite this and high electricity rates, PG&E has been trying to label CleanPowerSF as a “risky scheme” in mail pieces to San Francisco businesses. Such mailings by a utility violate state law. In response, San Francisco city attorney Dennis Herrera filed a petition with the California Public Utilities Commission in January. In his press release, Herrera linked the goals of clean energy and competition, “We cannot let Californians be denied the benefits of cleaner, cost-effective energy alternatives - consumer choice is simply too important to ratepayers and the environment.”

Critics of Proposition 16, including the Sierra Club, consumer advocates like TURN, elected leaders, public power agencies, and newspaper editorial boards see the ballot measure as even more dangerous than PG&E’s other anti-competitive efforts. The Sacramento Bee characterized Proposition 16 as a case of “a powerful special interest seizing the initiative process for its

own narrow benefit.” In a January editorial the paper said, “If [Proposition 16] passes, it enshrines unfair protections against competition for PG&E, one of the richest, most powerful corporations in the state, into the California Constitution.”

It’s now up to California voters. They’ll need to see through the taxpayer-protection veneer of Proposition 16, and to perceive it for what it actually is: an attempt to permanently stifle free-market competition and expansion of the state’s renewable-energy industry.

John Rizzo, member, San Francisco Group Executive Committee; and a trustee on the San Francisco Community College Board

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Rafting the Kicking Horse River

By Heather Anderson

The story goes that Sir James Hector (1834-1907), a Scottish geologist, naturalist, and surgeon, while on an expedition to explore a new railway route for the Canadian Pacific railway over the continental divide and to collect new species of plants, was kicked in the chest by his horse and knocked unconscious. His colleagues, thinking him dead, dug a grave and prepared to bury him. He, however, regained consciousness. The burial was cancelled and thus the naming of Kicking Horse Pass and Kicking Horse River respectively.



The Kicking Horse River
Photo by Darren Kirby from Wikimedia Commons

After crossing over the pass in our van, we disembarked at Wild Waters River Base Daylodge for our rafting adventure. I was not only just a bit wary, but noting the confidence of my colleagues, I followed them to layer myself with wet suit, booties, 2 flannel jackets, yellow slicker, red life vest, and orange helmet. These are glacial waters, made aqua green by the grinding of the glacier and the resulting white or gray powder rock mixing with the normal

dark blue waters. My worried inner self displayed pictures of being bounced out of the raft to be tossed over rapids as I made my way raftless downstream. Later, I was surprised to learn that I wasn’t the only anxious one aboard. And I certainly had not planned to sit in the very front as huge waves crashed over my head.

Gratefully, I noticed that our Ecuadorian river guide was not only very strong but equally skillful, guiding the raft between rocks and over drops, and purposefully heading into the deepest troughs and over the highest splashing waves to give everyone a severe soaking and an added adrenaline thrill. Rapids are graded classes I to VI. Our notable class IV rapids were given names like Hopi Hole, Roller Coaster, Twin Peaks, and Shotgun, but what with the steep gradient and rapid descent, I was so busy holding on that I failed to distinguish one from the other. What indelible memories! Kicking Horse really does seem to be a good name for that river.

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first in line. The gravel doesn’t do much good; I can feel the clay mud building up on my tires. A group of large cattle with impressive high horns--like cattle on the walls of Egyptian temples—chew cud in the road and reluctantly move off. I see a couple of portable shelters up ahead.

I park and get out, nervous about what to expect. Not many here yet, but soon a line of SUVs drives up. I begin snapping photos, trying to capture the shelters, the parking lot, the people and the mountain looming over it all. The mountain is too big and long to fit it all in. A fellow Sierran introduces himself—a lifetime member. I feel less nervous. A local lady asks me to photograph her ranch near the foot of the mountain a mile or so away. I can’t get the camera to work. Oh, good, there it goes. I take three photos and realize the meeting is starting.

The Earth First! folks walk up, crash the party, and unfurl their banners. One banner reads, “Celebrate Earth Day. Blow Up a Mountain. Sponsored by Cemex. EF!” The other reads, “A Mountain, Not a Mine.” An older fellow in a cap is presenting Cemex’s case in one of the shelters. A blonde lady named Jennifer, who asked me earlier if I were a journalist, walks up to the Earth First! people and asks them to remove their banners. She asks them to leave, explaining, “It is private property.” They aren’t moved

See “Cemex” 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.

Steve Cosner (559) 281-5983, email: stevec@sfsu.edu maintains this webpage.

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.

May 3-6 - Monday - Thursday

Car camp and hiking: Inyo Mountains

Possible overnight backpack or two day hikes to the Trepier Cabin area of the Inyo mountains. Hikes will in the range of 3D or 3E if day hikes 2D or 2E if backpacking. We will be looking for a gold mill rumored to be within a few miles of the Trepier Cabin. At the same time a group will be doing research on the Salt Tram across Daisey Canyon from where we will be. We may be asked to support their efforts with radio feedback. Adding a fifth day is desirable. We will pass thru the Cerro Gordo ghost town and be camped where we can look down at Lone Pine and across at Mt Whitney. Wild flowers should be good this year on top of the Inyos where we will be.

For more information call Richard Sloan at 559 696-2971 or email at riverrich1509@aol.com

May 15, Saturday

Day Hike (2A)

Black Diamond Mine (Yokuts)

We'll hike 6-8 miles on trails that thread the oak savannah in this Regional Preserve near Concord, passing by old coal mining townsites, mining tunnels, and historic cemeteries. Possible mine tour. Bring 2 liters water, lunch, layered clothing, sun hat, and \$\$ for parking fees, tour, and carpool. Meet at Modesto Park n Ride at 8 am (call for alternative meeting spot). Probable dinner stop. Sign up with leader Elaine Gorman, 209.524.7630, or goford@sbcglobal.net.

June 12, Saturday

Day Hike (1A)

Stroll along the Tuolumne (Yokuts)

Easy 4-mile hike along the Tuolumne River. Meet at the parking lot by the American Legion Hall, 1001 S. Santa Cruz Avenue, Modesto. Meet at 9 AM. Dogs and children welcome. Info., Dorothy -- 209.549.9155.

Sat. June 5th

Spring to the Top 3C day hike

Get in shape for summer hiking on the Four Mile Trail from Yosemite Valley up to Glacier Pt. Enjoy a sumptuous barbecue afterward on the lawn of the historic Wawona Hotel. (barbecue optional)

call leader: Karen Hammer 298-5272

Outings Leader Training, June 4-6

The National Sierra Club has scheduled an Outings Leader training class at Clair Tappaan Lodge the weekend of June 4-6 for any club members who are interested. The class will include OLT 101 and 201. If you are interested in becoming an Outings Leader, or if you are presently a leader who needs to recertify OLT 101, this is the ideal way to get your training. (Leaders must recertify OLT 101 every four years.) Cost is only \$45, and includes room and board. Please contact the Outings Chair, Marcia Rasmussen, at Marcia@BigBaldy.com if you would like to attend, or if you would like more information.



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

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by her words. She then asks them to leave. They remain. They quietly, patiently, remain unmoved. She sulks off.

Throughout this time, the fellow in the cap has paused his presentation. A tall fellow in a gray jacket—looking managerial—now approaches Jennifer and whispers that the presentation will start up again. Wahallich—the mountain’s name for several thousands of years—waits patiently, indifferently, unperturbed—patches of sunlight playing in the wild mustard on her slopes—as this comedy plays out on her damp and grassy skirts.

The presentation starts again. The wind picks up—a few drops of rain. The white-haired fellow in the cap adumbrates Cemex’s case: The Valley needs aggregate to grow. The supply is running out. There won’t be much noise because explosions will be 40 feet underground. You won’t see the work. There will be no inordinate pollution because of California regulations. Etc. Etc.

The talk is punctuated by interruptions from the audience. They are assertive but civil. They are repeatedly asked to wait till the end. When the presenter seems to be about out of steam, one speaks up. “I have a question about air quality.” “Please wait until I’m finished, and then I’ll answer your question.” The questioner is not put

off. “The Environmental Impact Report says the impact to air quality will be significant and unavoidable. My question to you is do you know how many people die prematurely each year in the San Joaquin Valley because of ozone?”

To be continued in the June edition, where you will learn what a Choinumni woman has to say about this mountain that is sacred to her and her ancestors.

Sierra Celebration

By Heather Anderson

Robert Alt (1938-April, 2010) was a successful Physics teacher for many years at CSU Dominguez Hills. End-of-semester evaluations were almost all at-the-top. His favorite activities were teaching and working with students in the lab. A background in high school running and later race-walking prepared Bob well for being my hiking partner locally in the Sierra, and in other places as far flung as Alaska, Costa Rica, Thailand, and Europe. A good sport, he would go anywhere I suggested.

Introduced by a friend, we courted by email for a few months before actually meeting dur-

ing a Christmas holiday weekend. I had three “tests” prepared: (tennis, he hadn’t played before), cross-country skiing (heavy snow the night before; we broke trail and his two previous experiences were inadequate preparation). But the bike tour into the countryside was a success; we married in August, and honeymooned with base-camp at McGee Lake.

Described by his colleagues as innovative and creative in his lectures and lab experiments, students saw him as enthusiastic, energetic, and understanding. “You made Physics fun,” they remarked. Dr. Bob—quiet spoken, humble and hard working, gentle and thoughtful—was life member of the Sierra Club.

