



# Tehipite Topics

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[www.tehipite.sierraclub.org](http://www.tehipite.sierraclub.org)



Male ivory-billed woodpecker. Photo by Jerry A. Payne, USDA Agricultural Research Service

## The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker

By Chip Ashley

I hope you will join me at the May general meeting on May 18th. Matt Wilkes of the Fresno Audubon Society will present a screen of Ghost Bird, about the mysterious ivory-billed woodpecker, and lead a discussion.

When I opened Heather Anderson's email about the program for this month's general meeting—a screening and discussion of the critically acclaimed film, Ghost Bird, about the believed to be extinct (or not) ivory-billed woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*)—I was intrigued by a quote Heather included from the New York Times which describes the film as “spellbinding...a cosmic lament for the forest primeval and man's search for environmental redemption.”

See Woodpecker, page 4

## The Friant Ranch Project, CEQA, and Environmental Impact

By Gary Lasky

Since the early 1970s, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has evolved to be an important tool for residents who wish to protect their quality of life from dramatic alterations of their environment, often in the form of real estate development projects like the the Friant Ranch project. The Act is designed to ensure that the public is informed of the harmful environmental impacts of a proposed project in order that it can turn, at election time, to the ballot box to replace elected officials who are not working in the best interest of the public.

CEQA is a procedural law. It functions by ensuring that an orderly process is used in the writing of an Environmental Impact Report, or EIR. EIRs are created for large or controversial projects that impact the well-being and quality of life of the public.



### The Friant Ranch Project

According to CEQA, and as modified over time by case law (State court decisions) and guidelines from the California Secretary of Natural Resources, an EIR must identify the harmful impacts of a project on the environment. These impacts must be addressed wherever they exist, including the categories of air quality, water quality, wastewater, water supply, biology, archaeology, traffic and aesthetics. In addition, the cumulative impacts of a project. See CEQA, page 4

## San Joaquin River Trail Run

By Don Gaede

On a beautiful morning in April, three intrepid people joined me on the first (to my memory) Tehipite Chapter trail run. We ran--and walked--about 8 miles that day, covering a portion of the San Joaquin River Trail. Starting at the abandoned cattle corral near the end of Sky Harbor Road, we hiked up a steep fire road, and then met up with the main trail. There we turned right, and began jogging down the trail.

Whenever I run trails, I am impressed with 2 things: 1) how much more interesting it is than running on a street or a track, and 2) how incredible our minds are. They have to calculate in microseconds the perfect spot for our foot to land. An alert but relaxed mind state is helpful as one negotiates the often irregular surface of the trail.

The San Joaquin River Trail is a combination of existing trails and new trails to be constructed; it will eventually stretch from Friant Dam to the Pacific Crest Trail in the High Sierras (near Devils Postpile National Monument). The trail will cover a distance of about 77 miles and gain 10,000 feet of elevation. Our Tehipite Chapter is a member of the San Joaquin River Trail Council that oversees the trail's construction and maintenance.

As I ran under the canopy of oak trees and leaped over cool streams, I had fun imagining I was an ancient Mono Indian. In many places, this trail follows the path that Mono Indians took when they crossed the High Sierras to trade and gather obsidian. I speculate they didn't just walk this trail--they ran it too, just like we were doing. And I imagine they were wearing moccasins very similar to the Vibram Five Fingers worn by one of our running cohorts. The Mono Indians had a lot of distance to travel to obtain their ar-

See Trail Run, page 6

# Chapter Meetings

## General Meeting

May 18th at 7 p.m.  
550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno

Matt Wilkes, Executive Director of the Fresno Audubon Society, will present a screening of *Ghost Bird*, the critically acclaimed environmental documentary from director, Scott Crocker, explores the remarkable rediscovery of the Ivory-billed woodpecker in the swamps of Arkansas, taking a closer look at the role politics, science and culture play in shaping the unprecedented recovery effort.

New York Magazine called *Ghost Bird* "spellbinding a cosmic lament for the forest primeval and man's search for environmental redemption." "The most compelling aspect of the film is the message it carries about bird conservation and our essential role in stewarding the birds and habitats that are in our control," said Graham Chisholm, Executive Director, Audubon California. *Ghost Bird* features insightful interviews with David Sibley (best selling author and bird illustrator) and Nancy Tanner (the only living person to closely observe Ivory-bills). (<http://ghostbirdmovie.wordpress.com/audubon/>)

## Conservation & Executive Committee Meetings May 11th

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

## Merced Group

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## Merced Conservation and Executive Committee Meetings

(the first Thursday of each month)

Our next conservation and executive meeting is Thursday, April 7, 7:00 P.M. at Rod Webster's home, 345 E. 20th St., Merced. The conservation meeting is first and lasts 30-40 minutes. Anyone with an interest in local, state, or national conservation issues is welcome to attend.

## Merced Group General Meetings

(Third Thursday of each month, except Dec. and May)

Our general meetings start at 7:00, usually over by 8:30 or so. New location- the Activity Room at the Hampshire, 3460 R St. (just before Yosemite Ave. when headed north). Through the front door, straight ahead through the lobby, to the room back left. There will be signs to assist. There will be another event going on in the lobby so just pass on through.

## The May Picnic: May 21st

In lieu of our general meeting, join us for warm sunshine, gentle breezes, yummy food, and stimulating company. The location is Lake Yosemite County Park, a few miles north of town (heading toward the foothills "feels" east). Bring your table setting, food to share, and any special beverages you want- ice tea and water will be provided. We'll start gathering around 11:00 and plan on eating at 12:00.

To get there, take G St. out of town, turn right on Bellevue, when the road dead ends turn left on Lake Rd., past the UC, and on into the park. After entering, park in the lot to your immediate left. We'll gather at the picnic tables to the right of the yacht club building. This grassy area overlooks where the boats are berthed.

## June 16th General Meeting

In June we'll resume our normal schedule with a General Meeting on the third Thursday of the month.

Our speaker will be Sarah Matsumoto, senior field organizer from the Sierra Club office in San Francisco. She will speak on "Building Re-

silient Habitats." Sarah will focus on the Sierra Nevada and California Coast, two of the most vulnerable ecosystems in North America. Climate change will increase the great strain already on the wildlife in these habitats. The increased storms, heat, fires, and rising sea levels that are projected will have great impacts. What can be done to help protect the wildlife, wilderness, and human communities that coexist in these unique ecosystems? Come hear some interesting suggestions for approaching such a daunting prognosis.

## Eco News

by Marian Orvis

Thanks to Eco-Mania for the following salient sillies:

**SUN STROKE:** Now that the first photovoltaic panels are nearing --by around 2015--the end of their useful 25-year life expectancies, recycling them will be crucial since many solar cells use toxic metals such as cadmium or rare metals like indium. That's why, for example, First Solar in Tempe, AZ, takes back and recycles all of its cadmium telluride thin-film solar cells. And, the European association PV Cycle in Belgium is starting a voluntary take-back and recycle program for panels that may no longer be able to convert sunlight into energy

In a related matter, solar panels and a solar hot water heater are going back on the roof of The white House. A solar array was placed there during the Carter administration in 1979, but was removed by President Reagan for "roof repairs" in the 1980's and never replaced.

**PLASTIC FANTASTIC:** A new ultra-light biodegradable foam plastic features two unlikely ingredients: the protein in milk and ordinary clay. The new substance uses the cow mil protein called casein, plus a small amount of clay and a molecule called glyceraldehyde which link casein's protein molecules together. It's all freeze-dried to form a substance so light that it's called "solid smoke."

**BAD BUSINESS, GOOD CLIMATE:** Carbon dioxide emissions will decline by 2.6% this year, the International Energy Agency





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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
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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.

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### Woodpecker, from page 1

I remember hearing about this bird when I was a kid, and the very name “ivory-billed”—so beautiful and exotic, so almost unicorn-like—evoked a romance that made it stick in my mind. I recalled seeing this almost too beautiful creature in the copy of Audubon’s *Birds of America* in my parents’ book collection. That romance was reawakened in 2004 when a report of a sighting of an individual bird in the swamps of Arkansas made it to the network evening news. This bird had been believed to be extinct for 70 or 80 years.

I wanted to find out more about this fascinating bird, so I went to the Wikipedia article on it and learned that it is also known as the Lord God bird, based on exclamations on people’s first startled sightings of this giant woodpecker, which is the size of a large chicken and sports an almost pheasant-like tail. The bird was highly sought after as a hunting trophy to hang on Victorian walls in the 19th century.



Audubon’s illustration from *Birds of America*

According to Jerome A. Jackson, author of *In Search of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker* (2006) “By 1938, an estimated 20 individuals remained in the wild, some 6-8 of which were located in the old-growth forest called the Singer Tract in Louisiana, where logging rights were held by the Chicago Mill and Lumber Company. The company brushed aside pleas from four Southern governors

and the National Audubon Society that the tract be publicly purchased and set aside as a reserve, and clear-cut the forest. By 1944 the last known Ivory-billed Woodpecker, a female, was gone from the cut-over tract” (98).

Don Moser, wrote in *Life Magazine* in April 1972, “Partly because the bird is so beautiful and we destroyed it, it comes back to haunt us. It is easy enough to find in it a symbol of all those creatures we have sent down the road to extinction, of the auks and the Carolina parakeets and passenger pigeons, of the great buffalo herds and the plains wolves—of the big wild and the lonely places, of that country inside us where a panther stretches in the sun. To find it would reassure us that a certain part of our past is not yet completely gone.”

Maybe there are still a few places on this planet that are still impenetrable enough to modern man and all his gizmos and greed and bulldozers where wild creatures like the ivory-billed woodpecker can live. Here’s to the hope that man’s destructive influence and control over this planet will recede so that there can be more and more such places!

### CEQA, from page 1

in combination with other projects in the region, must be examined. Cumulative impacts may occur despite the insignificance of an individual project’s impact when, taken over time and in a region, the combined impact is significant.

One example of cumulative impacts is Air Quality. In the San Joaquin Valley, our air basin is rated as an “extreme non-attainment area” for ozone. This means that we exceed the number of allowable days per year for which the ozone levels exceed a specified threshold. Levels above this threshold are known to harm human health. Because we already have a public health threat from ozone, any proposed project that delivers even the tiniest amount of ozone into our San Joaquin Air Basin is a significant environmental impact, based on the cumulative impact of this project, in combination with other already constructed and foreseeable projects in the future.

The EIR usually is prepared by consultants under the direction of County staff (although in the case of the Friant Ranch project, the EIR was prepared by consultants under the direction of other consultants!). In writing the EIR, the preparer must evaluate each predicted environmental impact of the proj-

ect. Where there is no accepted standard, the preparer may improvise the methodology and, in fact, may ignore best practices. The courts are lenient in evaluating an EIR's methodology, so you cannot usually win a challenge to an EIR by debating how the EIR evaluation was done.

On the other hand, EIRs can be successfully challenged by demonstrating to the court that a likely environmental impact was entirely ignored in the EIR analysis. It is necessary to show that this issue was raised in the public comment period and that the issue was ignored in the Final EIR.

Another required element in EIR preparation is mitigation. Mitigations are actions taken by the project applicant to attempt to reduce each environmental impact of a project to a level of insignificance. In order to facilitate approval of a project, the lead agency may make a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" if it is determined that, after all feasible mitigations are put into place, this particular environmental issue remains significant to the environment. Thus, if a project is thought to be particularly important to the economy or community, the lead agency may override important environmental impacts and approve the project in spite of them. Note: feasibility is a practical matter involving cost issues, so a potential mitigation may be too expensive to implement and thus declared to be "infeasible."

In the case of the Friant Ranch project, plaintiffs in the lawsuit filed against the project assert that the County required nothing more than token mitigations to relieve the traffic congestion and air pollution that will result from 18,000 additional vehicle trips per day after the Friant Ranch project reaches buildout.

#### Fallacies about Development

There is a natural tendency to believe that we, the public, hold no power to halt new housing development projects, even when we believe that they will be harmful to our quality of life. One reason for this is the constant stream of messages from the mainstream media about how the private sector is in charge of our world, that government is broke, that "government is the problem."

Much of this is myth-making at its best. It is important for the corporate masters to maintain their control and one of their principal tools is the elimination of hope that change for the better is possible.

In fact, it is a carefully crafted fallacy that peoples' voices don't count. The first thing

you can do to make a difference is to pierce these fallacies. When we individually take small actions, we can collectively see change at work.

Following are some common fallacies about development and rebuttals.

**FALLACY:** "Environmental protection hurts jobs."

**REBUTTAL:** Building Friant Ranch would create temporary jobs in housing construction, but the only long-term jobs would be in its city block-sized retail strip mall. These are low-wage jobs without benefits. They drain customers and sales from existing businesses within the City of Fresno. The truth is that environmental protection can create jobs. One of the fastest-growing sectors in the California economy is alternative energy and energy conservation.

**FALLACY:** "Development pays for itself."

**REBUTTAL:** The only way that a housing development could finance itself, is if the developer and homebuyers fund the infrastructure (roads, sewers, water supplies, schools) needed to support and maintain the development into the future. When economic times were good, counties negotiated with developers to pay for their own initial infrastructure. Now that we are in a severe recession, the counties have been without the necessary backbone to stand up for its (the taxpayers') treasury.

The stark fact is that development never pays for itself. It is assumed that property taxes will pay for public services such as fire and police, but the costs of road maintenance rely on state and local governments, agencies which secure the needed funds from – you guessed it – the next upcoming real estate development. The result is an ever tightening noose in which cities and counties must continue to grow unsustainably to pay yesterday's bills. The solution? Break the cycle and conduct a proper accounting of the true costs of development.

**FALLACY:** "Decisions are made behind closed doors. Once we hear about a project, it is too late."

**REBUTTAL:** Developers do everything they can to ensure their investments will bear fruit and so do develop sometimes cozy relationships with County Planning staff and developers. One of the landowners and principal proponents of the Friant Ranch project is Frank Bigelow, Chair of the Madera County Board of Supervisors. (Fri-

## Great

### San Joaquin River Clean-up

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

## Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

### Reserve early for 2011 !!

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

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

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

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





ant Ranch is just a quarter-mile from Madera county.)

But there are other layers of review, hurdles that development projects must clear. These include the courts. Environmental Impact Reports have clear rules that must be followed and, when county government does not adhere to these, then courts can and will order the county to do a do-over. These procedural safeguards are designed to hold politicians accountable and ensure that decisions are made with full disclosure of the environmental impacts of a proposed development project.

FALLACY: "My vote doesn't matter."

REBUTTAL: In November, 2012, the Chair of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors nearly lost to an upstart. Steve Worthley was caught by surprise when newcomer Brian Routh made it into a runoff and nearly defeated the incumbent, ultimately losing to Worthley by 109 votes (1.0%). Environmental activists are now taking aim at other County Supervisors who are up for re-election in 2012. At the same time, county staff are sweating to turn out a Final Environmental Impact Report for the upcoming Tulare County General Plan. They have now spent nearly twelve months responding to the voluminous public comments delivered on the Draft EIR and have the difficult task of preparing a document that will pass legal muster, as multiple lawsuits are awaiting their final product. Slow-growth activists are already taking aim at one incumbent Supervisor who faces re-election in 2012.

#### How You Can Make a Difference

Here are three things that you can do to halt outrageous development projects, starting with Friant Ranch:

- Make a financial contribution to one of the lawsuits designed to stop the Friant Ranch project. The Sierra Club is accepting tax-deductible checks.
- Learn how to challenge developments like Friant Ranch. A working group is organizing to train residents on how to comment on land use decisions. We are gearing up so that a team of volunteers will be ready when the Fresno County General Plan Update is released this summer. Beginners are welcome!
- Attend meetings. Volunteer activists are needed to attend meetings of the County and City of Fresno agencies that affect our environment and quality of life. Help is available from veteran activists to show you what is needed. The only requirement is an

ability to attend daytime meetings and to take notes.

In short, the answer is participation!

For any of the above items, contact Gary Lasky of the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter, in Fresno, at [data.nations@gmail.com](mailto:data.nations@gmail.com) or 559-790-3495.

#### Trail Run, from page 1

rowheads, so why would they just walk when they could run?

Furthermore, maybe we were "born to run." Harvard anthropology professor Daniel Lieberman argues that adaptations seen in human fossils suggest that early man, after he dropped out of the trees, was successful in large part because he could run. The large Achilles tendon, the strong arch of the foot, and even the large buttocks are all features that enhance our ability to run. Early humans weren't as fast as an antelope, but with their amazing endurance, they could run their prey to the point of exhaustion.

That day, we trail runners ran ourselves pretty darn close to exhaustion. But the experience was exhilarating, and whetted our appetite to do more of what we were all born to do.

#### Eco News, from page 3

has predicted, the largest drop in 40 years. Reason: mainly the economic recession, although government policies also have played a part. Oh....

**SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT:** A Japanese study of urban crows found that the crafty birds often drop nuts at traffic intersections for cars to roll over and crack.

No surprise, but what's more, when traffic was heavy, the crows waited for the "walk" signal before snatching their snacks from the street!

**WATER KILLS!** Dirty water is responsible for more deaths each year than violent crime and war, according to a report from the United Nations Environmental Program. Unsafe water leads to 1.7 million deaths a year or about 3.1% of all deaths worldwide. (Okay, how else will we control over-population?)

**BLINDERS:** Schools in Texas, Louisiana and South Dakota have been instructed by their legislatures to teach alternatives to the general scientific consensus on global warm-

ing. A study last year found that evangelical Christians are up to 3x more likely than other Americans to deny that global warming has human origins.

That's it! Gotta go...later, Kudos to Econews 2010/2011

### Watts Valley Visitors

By Chip Ashley

The Sierra foothills are a diverse ecosystem, and Watts Valley is no exception. At about 1400 feet of elevation, the area sees many species of birds migrating through following the four seasons.

The cute little Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), with its long white eyebrows and perky hash marked tail, is one such visitor. These birds are said to not to migrate, but I only see them in the spring here in Watts Valley. Perhaps they have micro-migrations within a small area around here. A few days ago, as I sat in my car listening to a Lance Canales song about the foothills on KFCF, I saw a pair of Bewick's flitting around a



Bewick's wren

Photo by Minette Lane from Wikimedia

couple of cow skulls Dad hung on a fence post a few years ago. Good place for spiders, those skulls with spider webs in their eye-holes—a favorite food of Bewick's. The pair must have noticed my attention because they flew over to the pine I was parked under and danced around in the shady branches for a few moments.

As I was washing dishes the other day, I glanced out the window to see a couple of tiny birds doing acrobatics on some fiddle-neck, just as in the photo below. I got my field glasses, and they turned out to be a pair of Lawrence's goldfinches (*Carduelis lawren-*

See Visitors, 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](http://www.tehipite.sierraclub.org/outings).

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

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

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## Sierra Club California Needs Your Help

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

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

**Donate generously!**

## Required Liability Waiver

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

## Spring Hike Along the Tuolumne River (Yokuts)

**Saturday, May 7, 2011 - 9:00am**

Easy Day Hike (1A), four miles along the Tuolumne River from Legion Park in Modesto. Meet at the parking lot by American Legion Hall (1001 S.Santa Cruz Ave.), 9 AM. Dogs and children welcome. Leader: Dorothy, 209-549-9155

## Redwood Canyon Day Hike

**Saturday, June 4, 2011 - 5:30pm**

Intermediate day hike, distance 9.3 miles. Descend 2400 ft.; climb 2400 ft. Max elevation 6900 ft. This is a hike of the loop trail through Redwood Canyon in Kings Canyon National Park. I am hoping to be there at the right time to see the dogwoods in bloom at the creek crossing in the middle of the hike. Leaders: Karen Hammer and Jim Wall. Contact: Jim Wall, 559-661-0604

## Ascent to Glacier Point and post hike barbecue

**Saturday, June 11, 2011 - 7:30am - 8:30pm**

Day Hike, Rating: Intermediate

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

## Flyfishing Upper Twin Lakes Car Camp

**July 8 & 9, 2011 - 7:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

Day Hike, Rating: Intermediate. Distance: 7.00 miles.

Ever want to try your hand at casting a fly for trout? Want to have a better than even chance of catching something on your first trip? Like hiking the high Sierra? Here's an opportunity.

Car camp Friday evening. On Saturday Morning, we will break camp and head for Upper Twin Lake. This is a moderate hike, all on trail (no cross country). Fishing here is good for brook and rainbow trout, all wild (not hatchery raised). We will practice catch and release with barbless hooks.

If people arrive at the campground in time, the leader will go over basic knots, how best to handle trout to be released, and answer any angling questions the group may have.

The leader will be going up Friday Morning in order to secure a campsite, so the participants will have to organize their own caravan/car pool, or simply drive up on their own. Email [flyflinger78@yahoo.com](mailto:flyflinger78@yahoo.com) for a printable topographic map of the hiking area. If you're willing to share your email to facilitate carpooling, say so. Fishing License required. Call John Cameron at 559 903 513838.. No experience is necessary.

## Mount Whitney Summit

**Saturday, July 30, 2011**

**Trip is currently filled with a waiting list.**

Difficult day hike; climbing and descending elevation 6,000 ft. Max elevation 14,505 ft. Interested in climbing the highest peak in the 48 contiguous US states? We are excited to offer this fabulous trip. It is one of THE premier hikes in the country, not only because of Mt. Whitney's "highest 14er" status, but because of the hike's extreme, rugged beauty. This is simply a must do hike. We will ask \$15 from each participant, to hold a space on the trip. This covers your share of the US Forest Service permit fee; it is non-refundable. We plan to carpool (a six hour drive) to Lone Pine the day before the hike and then car camp at the trailhead. Some people may be able to stay at a motel or hostel in Lone Pine, if they wish. We will assemble at the trailhead at 4:00 AM to begin our hike. Don't forget to bring a headlamp! Expect a very long day on the trail. If we're lucky, we may be down in time to eat dinner in town. Everyone will be tired, so we encourage participants to car

See Outings, page 8



**SIERRA CLUB** TEHIPITE CHAPTER  
 OF THE SIERRA CLUB  
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## Inside *Tehipite Topics*

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

### Outings, from page 7

camp at the trailhead or get a room in town. We will carpool back to Fresno area the following day.

Gerald Vinnard is primary leader, assistant leaders Marcia Rasmussen and John Rasmussen. Aside from the \$15 permit fee, participants will need to share campground fees or pay their own motel/hostel expenses. Bring your own food. Riders are asked to share carpool expenses.

Gerald Vinnard, 559-431-5780 or [gvinnard@hotmail.com](mailto:gvinnard@hotmail.com) or Marcia Rasmussen, 559-332-2419 or [Marcia@BigBaldy.com](mailto:Marcia@BigBaldy.com)

### Westlands Solar Park

You might have heard by now that a group called Westlands Solar Park, composed of several farming families in the Westlands Water District, is proposing to put in 5,000 megawatts of photovoltaic solar generation along the border of Kings County and Fresno County on the San Joaquin Valley's West Side. At about eight acres of solar panels per megawatt, the project would take up 40,000

acres—over 62 square miles. The generation capacity of this site equals approximately one thirteenth of the present commercial generating capacity in California.

The land is poorly drained and, barring expensive mitigation, eventually will have to be taken out of production because of selenium contamination. The site is part of the old Tulare Lake basin, where selenium has always drained into the area from the the Coast Range. Before the area was farmed and most of the Sierra rivers dammed, the salt buildup in the area was flushed out every few years through the San Joaquin Delta by natural flooding. Because of modern humans' interference with this natural cycle, selenium is building up to levels which in a few decades will prohibit farming. With a positive environmental impact report, this could an ideal location for large-scale solar.

### Visitors, from page 7

*cei*). "They follow the spring up and down the Sierra," said my friend Ron when I mentioned them to him. Spring is at its height in Watts Valley, and the Lawrence's are here. Lawrence's goldfinches are more colorful than the black and white photo, with splashes of yellow on front and sides, and the male



A male Lawrence's goldfinch

Photo by Linda Tanner from Wikimedia

has a distinctive black mask. They are not as brightly colored as the American goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*), but they are equally beautiful.

### Correction

In last month's story about Japan's disaster, I wrote *Chinatown* when I should have written *China Syndrome*. My brain playing tricks again! Mea culpa! Got Jack Lemmon and Jack Nicholson mixed up, I guess. Hard to do, but I managed! This month I have probably experimented unknowingly with a new kind of error.