

Tehipite Topics

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The Coast Belongs To Us All

Sierra Club's Coastal Protection Campaign Comes to Fresno

by Owen Bailey

In 1998, Sierra Club activists in nearby San Luis Obispo County started making phone calls. Every evening they would meet and call Club members to let them know about an important upcoming hearing. The California Coastal Commission was scheduled to discuss a development proposal on the central coast's famed Hearst Ranch. The Hearst Corporation wanted to build enormous luxury resorts and golf courses at pristine San Simeon Point, and the local Chapter was concerned. None of those dedicated volunteers had any idea how important their work on this issue was to become.

As the date approached, the callers felt sure that they would attract some supporters. They hoped the turnout would prove to be enough, but had no concrete way of telling what would happen.

On the day of the hearing, activists did not let them down. Supporters started arriving early and just kept on coming.

They came in surprising, even shocking numbers. By the time the hearing started, more than 1500 supporters were there, making this far and away the most people ever to attend any Coastal Commission hearing.

There is an old saying in the Sierra Club, that the only thing that can beat organized money is organized people. How true this turned out to be. After many hours of community testimony and endless developer presentations, coastal protection won the day...and the seeds were sewn for our statewide Great Coastal Places Campaign.

"As we have now proven time and again, large numbers impress decision-makers. By working together we increase our numbers," says Campaign Chair Tarren Collins. "We now have 5,000 members of this campaign from Eureka to San Diego to the Nevada border. They have shown time and time again that the coast belongs to all of us."

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Coast, from page 1

The Great Coastal Places Campaign allows people from throughout the state to participate in important coastal decisions. For the Hearst hearing, activists came from throughout California, to show that coastal protection is more than a local issue. Great Coastal Places has now created a way for activists to participate even if they can't take time off work or travel to attend important meetings.

"Even those of us who do not live by the beach need the coast protected for vacations, day trips and celebrations," says Collins. "California's coast is the envy of the world, and every bit of its 1,100 miles deserves protection."

Sierra Club Coastal Director, Mark Massara agrees. "This campaign has been extremely successful in bringing together huge numbers of activists from across the state," said Massara. "Everyone can do something small but significant so we can win real victories for our coast. We want future generations to be able to enjoy the great coastal places we all love."

The Great Coastal Places Campaign works on a number of issues throughout our state, focusing on protecting coastal water quality, ensuring public beach access and preserving remaining coastal open space.

"It's one thing when you live at the beach and see it every day," says Massara. "But imagine the disappointment to you and your family if you go on vacation and find you can't swim, due to polluted water. This campaign is working to ensure that doesn't happen."

The Great Coastal Places Campaign will be visiting Fresno for the first time, taking up part of the Tehipite Chapter's monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 9th. At the meeting, you will learn more about what this statewide network is doing to protect our threatened coast, and how you can get involved in the effort to protect our great coastal places for future generations.

When: Tehipite Chapter General Meeting—Wednesday, June 9th, 2004 at 7:00 P.M.

Where: Unitarian Church, 4144 N. Millbrook Ave., Fresno

For more information, write to savethecoast@sierraclub.org ✉

Meetings

Wed, May 5, 7 pm - Conservation Committee

Wed, May 12, 7 pm - General Meeting

Wed, May 19, 7:30 pm - Executive Committee

Unitarian Church
4144 N. Millbrook
Fresno

"Even those of us who do not live by the beach need the coast protected for vacations, day trips and celebrations."

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You won't want to miss this!

In 1992, my wife and I started hiking. We started taking short day hikes in Switzerland, but things quickly got out of control. We've trekked in Scotland, Canada, Peru, Argentina, and Chile. Last May, I soloed 400 miles across Ireland, averaging 18 miles a day for 23 days. Then, the 190 mile Coast to Coast walk in England. To satisfy my interest in the history of polar exploration and my love of walking across islands, I got the idea to attempt the Shackleton crossing of South Georgia. As preparation, I enrolled in a week-long winter mountaineering course sponsored by Rainier Mountaineering and had to learn about ice axe, crampons, roped glacier travel, crevasse rescue and winter camping. The South Georgia crossing was the most difficult thing I've ever done in my life.

Chapter General Meeting

Walking the Walk

presented by Ken Klug

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

7:00 P.M.

Unitarian Church

4144 N. Millbrook

Fresno, California

Ken Klug, a Fresno lawyer for over thirty years, was a member of the first commercial expedition to successfully retrace Sir Ernest Shackleton's 1916 crossing of Antarctica's South Georgia Island. He will visually share his experience with us on May 12.

Merced Group

MEETINGS

Thursday, May 20th, 7:00 P.M. Conservation / Executive Committee Meeting, M.S.E.F.C.U. ,1021 Olivewood Dr., Merced.

Mark Saturday, July 17th on your calendars. Planning meeting for next year's activities, speakers, and outings. Details will follow.

EVENTS

Saturday, May 22nd, 11:00 A.M. or so.

Annual Spring Picnic. Outing at Cindy Lashbrook's farm near Cressy.

Enjoy a pleasant lunch and good company, while learning more about organic farming methods and biological insect control. Tour Cindy's spread along the Merced River. Cindy was one of our featured speakers earlier this year. There was great interest to hear more on innovative natural techniques for the home gardener as well as larger scale farming operations. She kindly invited us out to see how earth friendly concepts translate to the field (literally).

Bring your own table service and a dish to share (main course, salad, or dessert—your choice). Ice tea provided, or bring your own beverage.

Directions: North on Santa Fe, Left at the stop sign in Cressy (=Cressy Way). Cross the RR tracks and take an immediate Right onto Cressy-Livingston Rd. Go 1.4 miles. . . just past the Boy Scout Camp there is an orchard on the right and a house just past it. That's the place. There will be a sign out. Cindy's phone is (209) 394-1420.

Need more info on the event? Phone Rod Webster (209) 723-4747.

Merced Group

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River & Trail Gear Sale

Saturday, May 8, 2004

8:00 A.M. until 2:00 P.M.

Proceeds will benefit the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust.

Coke Hallowell Center for River Studies
(11605 Old Friant Rd.)

Admission: **FREE**

Get great bargains in new & used canoes, kayaks, fishing rods & reels, bicycles, tents, backpacks, and accessories!

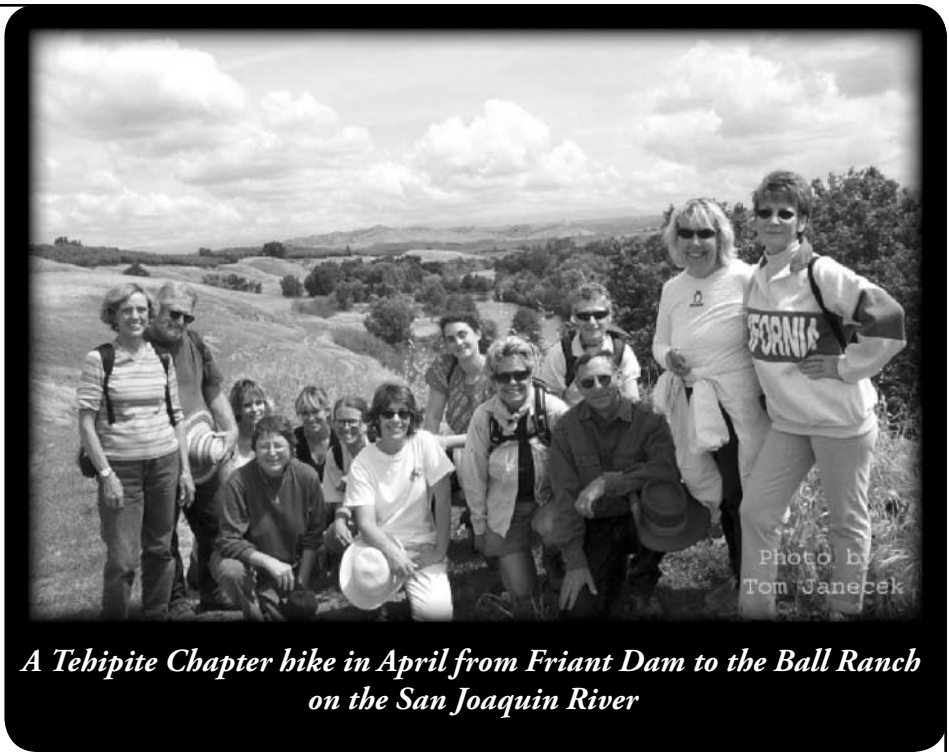
Donated Equipment: Donations of paddle sports, camping and backpacking equipment for the sale are needed before May 8th. Donations are tax-deductible.

Consignment Equipment: New & used equipment for consignment sales must be registered prior to the sale, and must be in good condition, with a \$100 minimum value per item. A commission of 30% will be charged for each item.

To donate or register equipment for consignment, call 248-8480 ext. 109. For general information, call 248-8480 ext. 110.

A Delicious Pancake Breakfast will be served between 8:00 A.M. until 10:00 A.M. - \$6/adult \$3/children 12 & under.

Herb Bauer Sporting Goods will be on site showcasing new boats.



A Tehipite Chapter hike in April from Friant Dam to the Ball Ranch on the San Joaquin River

Primeval Alaskan Forest Is First Roadless Casualty—But Hope Remains

by *David Edeli*

The coastal temperate rainforest in Alaska's Tongass National Forest is renowned as the only place in the United States where all of the plant and animal species that existed before the arrival of humans still exist—a natural Noah's Ark. Groves of Sitka spruce and western hemlock trees that grow to over 200 feet tall and live as long as 1,000 years provide critical habitat for large and still healthy populations of wolves, grizzly bear, Sitka black-tailed deer, bald eagles, and wild salmon.

Faced with generations of clear-cut logging, only the great size of the Tongass has allowed it to retain these

primeval characteristics in such abundance. However, fifty years of a culture of industrial clear-cutting has brought forest ecosystems to the brink. Sweetheart logging contracts in the Tongass and massive road-building subsidies from the U.S. federal government have resulted in over 5,000 miles of logging roads in the forest, and over 70% of the biggest trees cut and turned into plywood and paper products.

All of this logging has come at substantial expense to U.S. taxpayers. In the last twenty years alone, the Tongass logging program has cost the U.S. Forest Service almost \$1 billion dollars in subsidies to aid the industry's efforts. Furthermore, a recent study by the group Taxpayers for Common Sense showed that the backlog of maintenance and capital improvements on timber roads in the Tongass amounted to another \$880 million.

Both Alaskans who depend on a healthy rainforest and taxpayer groups—tired of paying to build roads to cut it down—rejoiced when President Clinton's Roadless Areas Conservation Rule put over 9 million acres of the Tongass National Forest off limits to road building and logging in the year 2000.

Unfortunately for the Tongass, upon taking office, President Bush appointed a former timber company lobbyist, Mark Rey, to be in charge of the U.S. Forest Service as undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture.

When Alaska's pro-development state government sued the Federal Government to protest the roadless rule in the Tongass, instead of defending the rule, Mr. Rey and the Bush administration decided to settle out of court. The result was not surprising. Despite receiving 250,000 public comments

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The Need For Better Planning In Yosemite

by Karen Schambach

*Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)**

On this cool spring evening, the eve of John Muir's birthday, I ponder the 9th Circuit Court's decision to enjoin construction projects in Yosemite Valley. The National Park Service can't seem to get it right when it comes to planning. This time they failed to address user capacity within the Merced River Comprehensive Management Plan. Last time they were sued over not having a river plan. Before that they were sued for fragmented planning. The recent injunction indicates the planning process is still dysfunctional in Yosemite.

A scene west of Yosemite Lodge exhibits tangible evidence of the park's inability to plan for the future of this precious park. Several dozen freshly cut stumps, up to four feet wide, stand as mute testimony to a significant planning failure. Two weeks ago the site supported a forest of towering Ponderosa pine and incense-cedar. The trees were cut to make way for the new "Lodge at Yosemite Falls", formerly Yosemite Lodge.

The failure comes when one realizes that Yosemite Lodge could have been renovated without destroying this forest. In truth, Yosemite Valley is so incredible, no new development should ever occur in undeveloped areas. The park's General Management Plan (1980) directs managers to reduce impacts on natural resources and return Yosemite Valley to as near its natural condition as possible. In direct contradiction, the Yosemite Valley Plan (2000), which includes the Lodge renovation, slates large undeveloped areas for new development. This is unnecessary; facilities can and should be upgraded within the existing development footprint and the Yosemite Valley Plan should be re-written with this goal in mind.

Another undeveloped area was lost recently at Yosemite Falls. After the 1997 flood, plans were made to build a new restroom, eliminate the parking area, and "improve" trails. A small trail ran east from the parking lot to the falls—a dirt path meandering through pine, incense-cedar and oak, traversing old bridges of wood and stone that spanned cascades and quiet pools. The old trail was peaceful, with deer, squirrels and jays going about their business. The new "improved" trail is a 5-foot wide paved road.

The planning process for the Yosemite Falls project was flawed. The Environmental Assessment presented no alternatives for the east side trail. Short term impacts were not identified; actual impacts included site closures, noise, visual intrusion, vegetation removal, soil disturbance, water



quality degradation, and wildlife disturbance—a deer fell into a large excavation. The footbridges were to be "rehabilitated"; instead, they were replaced with grossly over-engineered structures of steel I-beams, with concrete footings 15 feet by 15 feet by 10 feet deep. The project was to have benefited hydrology and water quality; instead, the Park Service has dumped tons of concrete and reinforcing steel into the stream channel for bridge and boardwalk footings. More than 70 trees were removed—one over 60 inches wide was destroyed for the new restroom. This is only the first of many additional developments planned Valley-wide on presently natural lands.

Yosemite Valley—the beloved and glorious sun-drenched cathedral of granite, with its forests, waterfalls, meadows, and abundant wildlife—deserves the very best humans have to offer in the way of protection and stewardship. Undeveloped places that offer a touch of wildness in Yosemite Valley are rare and precious beyond measure. One already has been sacrificed at Yosemite Falls. This cannot continue. In keeping with General Management Plan directives, the Park Service must preserve all undeveloped areas in Yosemite Valley, and return the Valley to as near its natural condition as possible. This will require a much better planning process and a much slower pace of development. The injunction is a very good first step. John would be happy with that first step. 🌲

** PEER is a national non-profit alliance of local, state and federal resource professionals—scientists, land managers, and law enforcement officers—dedicated to upholding environmental laws and values.*

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in opposition to the idea, the Forest Service exempted the Tongass National Forest from the Roadless rule on December 23rd of last year, unprotecting 9.6 million acres.

While soliciting public comments on the exemption, Mr. Rey and the Forest Service were simultaneously planning 50 timber sales in the roadless old growth areas of the Tongass. Now, with the Tongass exempted from the rule, the Forest Service has made 300,000 acres of pristine coastal rainforest there available immediately for clear-cut logging, which will impact nearly 2.5 million acres of old-growth watersheds when roadbuilding activities are taken into consideration.

Since the timber industry in the Tongass is so unprofitable, the logging companies need tens of millions of

dollars of public funds every year to be able to build and maintain logging roads. In June, Congress is expected to have the opportunity to stop the destruction of the Tongass when they will vote on whether to eliminate this funding for further roadbuilding in the old growth roadless areas.

If only for the sake of reducing the ballooning budget deficit and prioritizing funding for urban social and conservation needs, Senator Diane Feinstein and Central Valley legislators should commit to blocking these subsidies for renewed logging in the Tongass.

In the long term, Congress needs a balanced plan that would create wilderness areas in the roadless tracts of the Tongass, while allowing sustainable logging of second growth areas with existing roads. Congresswoman

Rosa DeLauro (D-CT 3) has created just such a balanced plan in her bill, the Alaska Rainforest Conservation Act (HR 979).

In protest of this first casualty of the Roadless Rule, and for the sake of this natural Noah's Ark in Alaska, the Central Valley legislators who have not yet co-sponsored the Alaska Rainforest Conservation Act—Dennis Cardoza, Cal Dooley, Devin Nunes, and George Radanovich—need to sign on immediately to protect this national treasure. ✎

Call or Write to Senator Diane Feinstein and your Congressional Representative and let them know that you don't want your tax money going to logging and roadbuilding in the Tongass National Forest:

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National River Cleanup May 15-22

The two biggest cleanup days are May 15 & 16. The greatest effort is needed in the 3-1/2 miles below Highway 99 on the San Joaquin River. If you can help on those two days please come on out. There will be a check in station at 8660 W Herndon Avenue (San Joaquin River Parkway) and at the corner of Sierra & Floyd (River Tree Volunteers.) The Millerton Area Watershed Coalition will be at Friant Cove (Highway 206 Bridge at Friant). If you can help other days (17-22 May) and for more information call Richard Sloan at 559 696-2971 or Liliane Sidler 559 248-8480 x110.

Outings

Our Tehipite Chapter Outings Chair is Bruce Busch (559) 225-8935 or tehipite50@netzero.com. Please contact him with any questions concerning our outings program. Contact the trip leader directly if you are interested in one of the listed trips.

Outings have a long history in the Sierra Club as a means for people to enjoy and get to know our natural environment. Through leader's efforts, we take people into the outdoors in a manner that promotes their safety and well being, and encourages the respectful use of the environment as a recreational resource.

By taking part in outings, trip participants become strong proponents for preservation of the outdoors. Over the years, outings have fueled the Club's conservation efforts and provided a training ground for its leadership. Your leaders are grassroots volunteers, an essential part of the Sierra Club, and help make the Club an important force for conservation in this country. Please note that a new sign-in sheet has been provided by to your leaders which codifies the outing's leader and participant's responsibilities.

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 call the leader well in advance for details, reservations, or if you plan to cancel. Outings start officially at the trailhead. Carpooling is encouraged but leaders can not be responsible for the organization of carpooling. The Sierra Club does not provide insurance for transportation. Drivers are normally reimbursed five cents per mile by passengers. No guns, pets, or radios are permitted on trips. Please leave the area cleaner that you find it. Travel responsibility rests on each participant.

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 4000 feet

Trip Schedule

May 2004

May 1st - Saturday

Day hike (1A) Moderate.
Willow Creek. We will pass by two waterfalls. Don Redmond (559) 268-1537

May 1st - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing - Intermediate
Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting. Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

May 6th - Thursday

Summer Planning Meeting
This meeting is for hikers as well as leaders! Meet at the House of Shish Kabob at Fresno and Alluvial for summer hikes and backpack planning. Bring maps and ideas. Dinner at 6:30, come at 7:30 for meeting. This is everyone's opportunity to shape and enhance the Outing program. Everyone is welcomed. Call ahead for reservations before May 4th. Bruce Busch (559) 225-8935

May 8th - Saturday

Day hike (2C) Moderately strenuous.
An all-uphill out-and-back hike to the tumbling and spectacular Chilnualna Falls. Carolyn Ordway (559) 449-7780 or cell (559) 281-8223

May 8th - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing - Intermediate
Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting. Gerald Vinnard (559) 431-9606

May 15th - Saturday

Day hike (3C)
This is the Panorama Trail hike. We leave from the Yosemite Valley floor and climb to Glacier Point. From there we follow the Panorama Trail over the Illilouette, across the Panorama Cliffs to Nevada Falls, then down the Mist Trail past Vernal Falls.
Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

May 22nd - Saturday

Day hike (2C) Strenuous, but worth it.
Join me on a hike to the top of the highest waterfall in North America, and the 5th highest fall in the world. Yes, I'm

talking about Yosemite Falls, all 2,425 feet of it. Don Gaede (559) 434-5138

May 28th - 31st — Friday - Monday.

Backpack (4E)
Backpack from 10,200' trailhead in the Inyo Mtns to Beveridge "ghost town" at 5,500' and then to hot springs in Saline Valley if shuttle can be arranged, otherwise return to trailhead. 4wd needed to get to trailhead. Richard Sloan (559) 696-2971

May 29th - Saturday

Day hike (1A) Moderate
Grant Grove to Sequoia Lake. Lunch at the lake and return to Grant Grove. Bruce Busch (559) 225-8935

June 2004

June 5th - Saturday

Half Dome (4E) Very strenuous. Out-and-back to some of the valley's most spectacular views. Beautiful water falls. Carolyn Ordway (559) 449-7780 or cell (559) 281-8223

June 5th - Saturday

Day hike (2A) Moderate
Redwood Canyon. Don Redmond (559) 268-1537

June 5th - Saturday

Day hike
Half Dome (4E) Very strenuous. Out-and-back to some of the valley's most spectacular views. Beautiful water Falls. Carolyn Ordway (559) 449-7780 or cell (559) 281-8223

June 5th - Saturday

Day hike (2A) Moderate
Redwood Canyon
Don Redmond (559) 268-1537

June 12th - Saturday

Day Hike (1A)
Muir Grove & Little Baldy
A great twofer. Hike around three miles out to the Muir Grove. Stand in a circle of Giant Sequoias. Gaze over to Chimney Spire and Big Baldy. Back to the trailhead and hike a mile or so round trip to Little Baldy, a great view for

little effort. 1A or B Steve Cosner (559) 281-5983

June 12th - Saturday

Day Hike (1A)
Walt's easy trip. Look into the Valley from Taft Point, follow along the Valley rim to Sentinel Dome. Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

June 19th - Saturday

Day Hike (1A)
Panoramic Point.
We drive up to the ridge behind the Village near Grant Grove In Kings Canyon NP. A very short walk to an astonishing view deep into the Sierra. We could amble an extra 2 - 4 miles along the ridge to the fire lookout if we want. Too easy to classify. Dave Wallace (559) 284-2586

June 19th - Saturday

Day Hike (3C) Moderate
Twin Lakes in Sequoia National Forest. Trailhead is at the Lodgepole campgrounds. 2,800 foot elevation gain and 13.6 miles in and out. Aimee Leyva (559) 438-8670 or (559) 301-3977

June 26th - Saturday

Day Hike (2B) Moderate
Hike in the Ansel Adams Wilderness to Lady lake. Bruce Busch (559) 225-8935

June 26th - Saturday

Day Hike - Very Strenuous (4E)
Yosemite Valley Floor to Cloud's Rest. We will climb up the Mist Trial, passing Vernal Falls and then to Nevada Falls. Cloud's Rest needs an early start, but you will be rewarded with stunning views of Half Dome from its most dramatic angle. Carolyn Ordway (559) 449-7780, cell (559) 281-8223

July 2004

July 3rd - Saturday

Day Hike (2B) Moderate
Jennie Lake, in the Jennie Lakes Wilderness. 1,500 foot elevation gain over 10 miles. Beautiful lake, bring swimming wear for a cool dip. Aimee Leyva (559) 438-8670 or (559) 301-3977



**SIERRA
CLUB**

TEHIPITE CHAPTER

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Take Action on the Tongass

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You can find your congressperson using on the internet at: www.house.gov

You can also send an email to your congressperson at <http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

For more information, or to send a fax online, go to www.akrain.org.

David Edeli is the California Coordinator of the Alaska Coalition, a coalition of 800 groups nationwide that includes the Sierra Club as its most prominent member. He can be reached at (415) 252-7524 or dedeli@hotmail.com

Dinner with the Speaker

Our chapter is starting a new tradition: dinner with the General Meeting speaker. Meet with our May speaker, Ken Klug, and our Chair, Richard Sloan at 5 P.M. at the Spaghetti Factory, 1610 E. Shaw avenue.

Tehipite Topics is published monthly except July and August by the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club. Subscriptions are \$1 per year for members, included in the annual dues, and \$10 for non-members. Mail Checks to Tehipite Chapter, Sierra Club, P.O. Box 5396, Fresno, CA 93755.