



# Tehipite Topics

December 2006 ❧ Vol. 52, No. 9

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

## Adventuring in Alaska

by Heather Anderson

It all started at a Tehipite Chapter banquet, when I sat next to a former superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. He told me about George Herben's book on Wrangell, America's largest National Park, and I got very interested in going there. When I saw a Sierra Club outing scheduled in that area, I seized the opportunity. We couldn't have had better leaders than Wayne, a San Francisco fire fighter, and Ellen, a leader-in-training, also a fire fighter, who commandeered the cooking duties.

Leaving Anchorage en route to catch a ferry at the small fishing village of Whittier, we stopped at a Visitor Center



Valdez

The trail to Saddlebag Lake on the first morning wound through mossy trees and a lush, three-foot-high ground cover, including "devil's club," aptly named for the painful itch it inflicts when touched. The landscape later turned to low rich vegetation with streams and open space. Saddlebag Glacier was at the far end of the lake, twice as far now than twenty years ago. The second day's glacier hike was on the hilly, rock-ice Sheridan Glacier itself. Though cool,

See *Alaska*, page 4



Cordova

to view the Portage Glacier. Due to meltdown, the glacier is now three miles distant from the Center. After boarding the new Alaska State Ferry across Prince William Sound to Cordova, we enjoyed a cold chicken salad dinner, while heading to our first rainforest camp site. Yes, it was raining. Not to worry; our ingenious leader improvised a mess tent and we still enjoyed sumptuous campfire meals including broiled salmon and baked potatoes. I had expected "backpack" or "camp" food, but was surprised and appreciative of the creative, delicious meals of fresh food served up.



# December General Meeting

## “Wildlife of Southern Brazil”

presented by Helen Gigliotti

Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M.  
University of California Center  
550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno  
(across from Fashion Fair)

Join Helen on safari to several relatively untouristed areas of Brazil, as we explore regions of remarkable biodiversity and a high degree of endemism—rare and endangered primates and over 400 species of birds are there to be seen. We will visit Caratinga and Caraca, the two most spectacular reserves in Brazil’s threatened and fragmented Atlantic forest system, less well-known, but 20 million years older than the Amazon. In Serra da Canastra National Park, we will experience the world’s highest concentrations of giant anteaters. The highlight of our safari will be several days in

the Pantanal, the planet’s largest wetland area, supporting huge numbers of capybara—the world’s largest rodent—giant river otters, the elusive jaguar and numerous exotic water birds. Our finale will be a visit to the celebrated Iguacu Falls.



## Conservation & Executive Committees

Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M.

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



### Tehipite Chapter

P.O. Box 5396

Fresno, California 93755-5396

Copyright © Tehipite Chapter, 2006

Chapter phone . . . . .(559) 229-4031

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

### Officers

#### Chapter Chair

Gerald D. Vinnard . . (559) 431-5780  
. . . . . gvinnard@cvip.net

#### Chapter Vice-Chair

JoAnne Armstrong . .(209) 726-0636  
. . . . . sierrafer@peoplepc.com

#### Chapter Secretary

Aimee Leyva . . . . . (559) 438-8670  
. . . . . aimee\_leyva@yahoo.com

#### Chapter Treasurer

Joe Ruff . . . . . (559) 436-4880  
. . . . . 2tehipite@sbcglobal.net

### Executive Committee Members

William Fjellbo . . . . (559) 642-4511  
. . . . . jbfjellbo@sierratel.com

Don Gaede . . . . . (559) 434-5138  
. . . . . gaede80@sbcglobal.net

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

John Flaherty . . . . .(209) 742-4668  
. . . . . kjohnflaherty@yahoo.com

### Chapter Committee Chairs

#### Council of Club Leaders Delegate

JoAnne Armstrong . .(209) 726-0636

#### Awards

Gerald Vinnard . . . . (559) 431-9606

#### Hospitality

Rae Marx . . . . . (559) 641-7589

#### Tehipite Topics Editors / Website

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

#### Membership/Hospitality

Rae Marx . . . . . (559) 641-7589

#### Membership/Newsletter Distribution

Marian Orvis . . . . . (559) 226-0145

#### Outings and Outings Leader Training

Richard Sloan . . . . . (559) 696-2971  
. . . . . RiverRich1509@aol.com

#### Political Committee

William Fjelbo . . . . . (559) 642-4511

#### Programs

Heather Anderson . . (559) 434-2510

### Conservation Committee

#### Conservation Chair

Heather Anderson . . (559) 434-2510  
. . . . . ha062@cvip.net

#### Air Quality / Transportation / Global Warming

Kevin Hall . . . . . (559) 227-6421  
. . . . . hallmos@aol.com

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

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

#### Sierra National Forest

Tom Eliason . . . . . (559) 439-7195  
. . . . . tomeliason@comcast.net

#### Water

Chris Acree . . . . . (559) 709-4913  
. . . . . chris.acree@comcast.net

#### San Joaquin River

Richard Sloan . . . . . (559) 696-2971  
. . . . . RiverRich1509@aol.com

#### Wilderness/Desert

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

#### Yosemite National Park

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

#### CNCC Delegate

Heather Anderson . . (559) 434-2510

## **Merced Group**

Sierra Club  
Box 387  
Merced, CA 95341

### **Group Chair**

JoAnne Armstrong. .(209) 726-0636  
.....sierrafer@peoplepc.com

### **Group Vice-Chair**

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

### **Group Treasurer**

Dave Tucker . . . . . (209) 384-1354

### **Group Secretary**

Annette Allsup . . . . (209) 723-5152

### **Member-at-Large**

Jule Biesiada. . . . . juleb13@msn.com

### **Conservation Chair**

JoAnne Armstrong. .(209) 726-0636  
.....sierrafer@peoplepc.com

### **Publications**

Rod Webster . . . . . (209) 723-4747

### **Agriculture**

Charlie Magnuson . . (209) 394-7045

### **Membership**

Linda Lagace . . . . . (209) 384-1354

### **Publicity**

Rod Webster . . . . . (209) 723-4747

### **Population**

Tammy Johnson . . . . (559) 665-5507

# **Merced Group**

## **Conservation and Executive Committee Meeting**

Thursday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. at Rod Webster's home, 345 E. 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **Annual Banquet**

Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> P.M. at the Branding Iron  
640 W 16<sup>th</sup> St Merced

Auction 6:00 P.M., Dinner 6:30 P.M.

Speaker 7:30 P.M. (no cost)

### **Speaker Tony Brochini, Chairman of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation**

Tony Brochini will share the history of his people, including current-day efforts to research and preserve their past. Tony grew up in Yosemite Valley, part of the lands his people have historically inhabited for at least 1500 years. Tony's involvement with tribal affairs can be traced back to his great-great grandmother, Mary Wilson, who was the matriarch of the tribe prior to 1930.

Dinner Tickets: \$22 must be reserved and paid for by November 20<sup>th</sup>.

Aloha Floral	290 Merced Mall	384-2213
Applewood Gifts	510 W 18th Merced	384-7422
Merced Floral	Raley's Shopping Ctr	722-7444
Sierra Club	PO Box 387, Merced CA 95341-0387	

Dinner choices: 8 oz. top sirloin steak, baked sole almon-dine or vegetarian lasagna. Indicate choice on your reservation.

Make checks to Merced Sierra Club.

Contact Linda Lagace at (209) 384 1354 if you have an item (art, pottery, jewelry, etc.) to donate to the auction.

Election ballots will be collected at the banquet or can be sent to our P.O. address.

## **Volunteers Needed**

Our local group needs someone who can volunteer to be in charge of our calender and card sales. Contact Rod Webster at (209) 723-4747 if you are willing to help.

## **Outings**

Please see the Tehipite and Yokuts (Modesto area) chapter listings. Phone Rod Webster at (209) 723-4747 if you would like to coordinate carpooling with others from your area.

## **January 17<sup>th</sup> General Meeting**

Chhedar Sherpa, trained to do scientific field work in Nepal, has become involved in Mt. Everest climbing work and has summited three times. Come prepared to hear about Chhedar Sherpa's adventures.

## **February 21<sup>st</sup> General Meeting**

Heather Bernikoff and David Raboy will make a presentation on and bring their electric car. This technology has such a huge connection with the air quality issues facing the Valley today. According to Heather and David, the issue of oil is at the root of all of many environmental problems, yet leadership on the national level has been far from helpful.



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
<b>Special Offer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$25</b>	
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](http://www.sierraclub.org)

F94Q W1300 1

### Alaska, from page 1

we lunched on the glacier. The Child's Glacier on the Copper River the third day was a surprise, a towering 300-foot icy cliff just a small river's width away. I waited expectantly and was not disappointed to hear cracking and thundering sounds as huge icy chunks calved and splashed into the river. Beautiful! But I do remember that melting glaciers are just one more indication of global warming. The return to our rainy campsite was made special by a delicious Mexican tostada dinner complete with chicken and avocados.

The following day in Cordova was sunny and beautiful, as we explored homes and gardens on the hill overlooking infamous Prince William Sound. It is a lovely town and setting, in contrast to the tragedy that occurred there on the night of

### Kennicott Old Mining Buildings



March 23, 1989. That incident was elaborated for us by Riki Ott, author of *Sound Truth and Corporate Myth: Legacy of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill*, while we dined at the Orca Inn (see [www.soundtruth.info](http://www.soundtruth.info)). At the time of the spill, she was in Cordova, after finishing her dissertation from the University of Washington, on the effects and disposal of toxic sediments on the ecosystem. She still lives there and is helping the community to “get off fossil fuels,” to resist oil field developments, and to become empowered to change, in order to survive. Her book is an account of the devastating impact of Exxon Valdez’s oil spill and Exxon’s failure to compensate the community adequately for the destruction of the entire area, its wildlife, the fishing industry, and way of life of its inhabitants. Their jobs disappeared overnight; their livelihood vanished, leaving after-effects ranging from drinking, drugs, and bankruptcy to suicide. Although Exxon Valdez has settled with state and federal governments for damage to Prince William Sound, they still have not paid a penny of the punitive damage award and only a bare token for compensatory damages to fishermen.

*Kennicott Glacier*



We exulted in the hot showers and comfy beds at our inn later that evening. Next morning we departed for our highlight trip to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Our campsite just outside the hamlet of McCarthy and the park visitor center was the rocky result of the retreating Kennicott Glacier. It was also thick with mosquitoes, but offered a great view of the glacier and Donohoe Peak in the background. I couldn’t believe it when McCarthy charged us a fee to walk across the bridge and enter their town (no tourist vehicles allowed). The town has refurbished itself as a nineteenth century mining town. Instead of mining, however, sports providers have moved in with rafting, flight seeing, glacier hiking, and tours; instead of miners,



*McCarthy Saloon*

sports enthusiasts and tourists abound. A park brochure described the contrast between the two early settlements—the wild and woolly McCarthy community in contrast to the industrious, hard working folks of Kennicott copper mines and community. We walked on the glacier, took a ranger-led tour of the ecosystem, identifying alder, dwarf dogwood, wild rose, fireweed, bluebells, and made a great hike almost to the mines higher on the mountain.

See *Alaska*, page 7

*Toe of Kennicott Glacier*



# YOSEMITE



## BUG

Rustic Mountain Resort

Just outside Yosemite National Park on 50 Acres of beautiful forested hillside.

Private cabins with bath or shared bath, dorms and tent cabins. Full service Ayurvedic spa with sauna, hot tub, cold plunge, massage, scented soaking room & yoga classes. Meeting rooms to accommodate conferences & retreats of all sizes. Outdoor amphitheater with fire pit. Cafe at the Bug serves fresh Californian cuisine with Vegans & Vegetarian options.

Visit us once, and you'll come back for a lifetime.

Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort  
6979A Highway 140, Midpines, CA 95345  
toll free 866 826 7108 or 209 966 6666

Website: [www.yosemitebug.com](http://www.yosemitebug.com)  
E-mail: [bughost@yosemitebug.com](mailto:bughost@yosemitebug.com)

Paid Advertisement 5/10

## Join The Sierra Club Online!

Visit [www.sierraclub.org/membership](http://www.sierraclub.org/membership)



Built by Sierra Club members in 1934, this rustic, hostel-style lodge stands atop historic Donner Pass, just an hour and a half from Sacramento. Expect convenient access to all mountain activities, excellent family style meals, a friendly staff and a casual atmosphere.



SIERRA  
CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

For more information about our special programs or to receive a full schedule and description of Clair Tappaan programs please visit our website at [www.ctl.sierraclub.org](http://www.ctl.sierraclub.org) or call (800) 679-6775.

## Ecoview

by Marian Orvis

### The Benefits of Biodiesel

Biodiesel reduces greenhouse gas emissions better than gasoline, ethanol, or conventional diesel, and can help shift your energy use to renewables.

### Why Biodiesel?

Studies show that biodiesel outperforms gasoline, ethanol, and conventional diesel in reducing climate-altering carbon dioxide emissions and in overall fuel-efficiency. Using 100-percent biodiesel (B100) eliminates all of the sulfur emissions associated with conventional diesel, cuts emissions of carbon monoxide and smog-producing particulate matter almost in half, and reduces hydrocarbon emissions by between 75 and 90 percent. Perhaps most significantly, using B100 reduces the emissions of carbon dioxide—the main greenhouse gas causing global warming—by more than 75 percent. Even using a blended biodiesel fuel like B20 (a 20 percent biodiesel/80 percent petrodiesel blend offered at most biodiesel fueling stations) still reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 15 percent.

If you are salivating over this information, call me at (559) 226-0145, and I'll send a copy of the entire article.

*Real Money* (Co-op America) July/August 2006

### Belated kudos to the label ladies!

For many years, once a month, the faithful gathered at my home to label the *Tehipite Topics* and catch up on the newest news that ladies find interesting. Good times were shared with Marie Carnahan, Barbara Luedeke, Louise Dorman, Nancy Howard, Joan Weeks, and unforgettable Frank Orvis, the lone brave male. Sometimes all of us were present at the same time, too!

We all agree that the group just wasn't the same without Martha Froelich, who died two years ago this month from injuries sustained in a devastating accident. We just never had the chance to say how important she was in our lives, but somehow I figure she had a good hunch.

Peace be with you all! ✿

# Outings Schedule

## December 9<sup>th</sup> - Saturday

Day Hike (1A)

A nice stroll along Millerton Lake from Sky Harbor Rd.

*Don Redmond (559) 258-1537*

The Merced Birders would like you to know some of the activities that they are planning. Feel free to contact Carolyn at (209) 722-2104 for more information about these trips.

- Morro Bay—January 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>
- Snelling (Henderson Park and Cathy's place)—winter
- Magneson farm—winter
- Cosumnes River Preserve— ?
- Copperstown Road—spring
- Arena Plains—?
- Pinnacles National Monument—fall/spring
- Santa Fe Grade—?

## Trip 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 Richard Sloan (559) 696-2971 [RiverRich1509@aol.com](mailto:RiverRich1509@aol.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.

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).

## Would you like to be an Outings Leader?

Being an Outings Leader can be very rewarding. Basic qualifications include a desire to lead outings, basic first aid or the ability to devote a day to getting qualified in first aid, and reading the Sierra Club Outings Leader Handbook. The Tehipite Chapter would like to offer outings to people of all abilities and ages. If you are interested, phone Richard Sloan at (559) 696-2971 or email [RiverRich1509@aol.com](mailto:RiverRich1509@aol.com).

Current Outings Leaders please contact Richard with your proposed hikes.

## Alaska, from page 5

Returning to Anchorage, the trip concluded with a picnic and tour of a Musk Ox Farm. The real conclusion, however, will be in our working to find solutions to problems of retreating glaciers, global warming, and restoration of communities and environments devastated by continuing oil spills. One way to begin this solving is to get out and gain a firsthand view of our environment and share that insight with others. For example, join a Sierra Club Outing! 🌲

## Kennicott Glacier





SIERRA  
CLUB

TEHIPITE CHAPTER

FOUNDED 1892 P.O. Box 5396 • Fresno, California 93755-5396

No Profit Org  
U. S. Postage  
P A I D  
Fresno, Calif.  
Permit No. 150

## Inside *Tehipite Topics*

Adventuring in Alaska.....	Cover
Chapter Events.....	2
Merced Group .....	3
Ecoview .....	6
Outings .....	7
New Caves Found in Giant Sequoia National Monument.....	Back

The *Tehipite Topics* is available, in color, on the Chapter website at <http://tehipite.sierraclub.org>.

Deadline for the January *Tehipite Topics* will be December 8<sup>th</sup>.

## New Caves Found in Giant Sequoia National Monument

by John Rasmussen

Not as significant a find as the cave recently discovered in Sequoia National Park, these two new discoveries are still very worthy caves. A long steep descent toward the Kings River leads to a cave and a large pit, about thirty feet deep. I came across this cave and pit about fifteen years ago, during a solo, weekend manzanita-crawling expedition, but did not explore either cave.

Last year I was able to convince my wife, Marcia, and other members of the San Joaquin Valley Grotto of the National Speleological Society to go in search of the cave and pit. We explored the cave, but ran out of time to descend into the pit. The cave, which we named Cave of The Giants, consists of a few rooms—one quite large, with an 80-foot ceiling—and a few interesting formations.

This year we ventured out again and descended into the pit, dubbed The Giant Pit. We found approximately 200 feet of cave passage—most of it a long room with ceilings up to 80 feet. At the bottom was the skeleton of an unfortunate mule deer buck.

As we descended and ascended the pit, each of us stood on the large rock just above Marcia in the photo. I was the last one up. As I stepped on the rock, it broke loose with a thundering crash, landing where we had been sitting moments before! ☘



*Marcia descends The Giant Pit.*