



# Tehipite Topics

September 2009 1 Vol. 55, No. 7

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

## Time to Say Good-bye to Jesse Morrow Mountain?

Will half of Jesse Morrow Mountain be blasted away over the next 100 years? The Environmental Impact Report on a Cemex project for “mining” gravel from this beautiful site along Hwy 180 is expected by September 15. If the Fresno County Board of Supervisors approves the project, all the dire outcomes Kay Barnes warned us about in earlier Topics articles (May 2005 and October 2006) are likely to become part of local reality, as follows:

- Blasting using fuel oil and fertilizer will occur several times a week.
- The company requests permission to operate 315 days a year, around the clock.
- The Plant proposes to use 150,000 gallons of water EACH DAY. The water is to come from wells on mine property
- All traffic to and from the mine will travel on Highway 180, a two-lane highway. CEMEX estimates 800-900 round trips per day from Jesse Morrow.

The Friends of Jesse Morrow Mountain also note that Cemex, the Mexican cement company that owns much of the slopes of the mountain, has a record in the US of environmental disregard. A recent Federal lawsuit over air and water quality violations was in February of this year (2007), this time concerning the Cemex plant in Victorville, California.

“This project, which will be visible from Highway 180, night and day, is projected to be in place for 100 YEARS,” Barnes warned in 2006. Its results—if the project is approved—will exist forever. On a clear day, Jesse Morrow is easily visible from just about any high point in Fresno, so this scar will stand out forever as a testament—or a tombstone—to the value Fresno County places on its places of natural beauty.



*Black and White rendering of Oil Painting by Paul Buxman*

*The Jesse Morrow Mountain is in Southeast Fresno County. It lies along the Blossom Trail north of and adjacent to the scenic King's Canyon Highway. It is the first mountain you encounter as you leave the valley on your way up to the Sierras and King's Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. It's majestic slopes, dotted with wildflowers in spring or golden grasses in summer and range cattle year round have been an inspiring sight for as long as human eyes have fallen on it.*

Our environment is likely to be threatened by more and more projects like this as long as local politicians continue to promote growth and development as they have historically done. How much more “progress” can we afford? If you want to draw a line in the San Joaquin Valley alluvium and yell “Enough already!” please go to [www.jessemorrowmountain.com](http://www.jessemorrowmountain.com) to sign a petition and call 559-488-2157.

# Chapter General Meeting

## What's New at Machu Picchu

Wednesday, September 16th at 7:00 pm

University of California Center

550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno - (across from Fashion Fair)

Machu Picchu is the most popular tourist destination in Peru, and probably in South America (at least for North Americans and Europeans visiting that continent), visited by more than a half million tourists every year. It was recently voted one of the "Seven Wonders of the World" in internet balloting and is listed by UNESCO as a "World Heritage Site." The site was "discovered" by Hiram Bingham in July, 1911. At the time, Bingham, a professor at Yale University, was in Peru searching for the so-called "lost" capital of the Incas -- the place to which the last Inca rulers had fled after the Spanish conquest of Peru. Several generations of Inca kings held out against the Spanish in the jungles north of the old Inca capital, Cuzco. It was in this region that Bingham was searching for the archaeological remains of this lost kingdom. Recent discoveries, however, tell us that Hiram Bingham was wrong -

*See Macchu Picchu, Page 3*



## Conservation & Executive Committees

Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 P.M.

University of Calif Center, 550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno  
Come and find out about what our chapter is doing  
behind the scenes and how you can get involved -

**All Members Welcome**



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**Publicity** . . . . . open

# Tehipite & Yokuts Chapter Outing Schedule

Sept. 4 -7 - Fri-Mon

Labor Day Weekend Backpack (2B)  
Silver King Creek, Carson-Iceberg  
Wilderness (Yokuts)

Our route begins at Rodriguez Flat trailhead, passing through Corral and Coyote Valleys on the way to Upper Fish Valley. Day hikes to Whitecliff, Tamarack, and Poison Lakes will occupy us as we move downstream.

Fishing for Piute cutthroat trout allowed below Llewellyn Falls.

Limited to 10 participants.

Elaine Gorman, 209.524.7630 or  
goford@sbcglobal.net to sign up.

September 11-12 - Fri & Sat

Various hikes in Sequoia Park (3C)

We will decide routes depending on interest and conditions. Come for either day or both.

You should be experienced and in shape for these.

John Flaherty (408) 464-5141

Sept 12 - Saturday

Day hike (2C)

Mt Givens. 8 miles, 2400 ft.

Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

Sept 19 - Saturday

Day hike - To be determined

Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

Sept 26 - Saturday

Day hike - To be determined

Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

Date to be announced

Gaylor Lake and

Bennerville ghost town. (3C)

This beautiful climb reaches 11,000 feet and ends at the ruins of a silver mine near the Tioga Pass entrance station.

John Flaherty (408) 464-5141

October 3, Saturday

Chewing Gum Lake, Emigrant Wilderness (Yokuts) Day Hike (2B)

Approximately eight mile hike, from Gianelli to lovely Chewing Gum Lake to Crabtree at elevations of about 7,000+ with a steep climb at the beginning. . Swimming is an option, if warm enough. Bring lunch, ten essentials, and money for dinner on the way home. Meet at Denny's parking lot in Oakdale at 7:45 a.m.

Monica Casey (209)996-0058 or

hikerlady1955@yahoo.com Co-leader TBA

October 4 - Sunday

Annual Hike to TwinLakes and George Lake,s(2A)

The last two years we've enjoyed fall colors among the aspens, light dusting of snow on the trail, and spectacular mountain vistas.

Karen Hammer (559) 298-5272

Check chapter website for hike updates

## Community Events

Movie: The American Southwest;  
Are We Running Dry?

Fri, Oct 2 at Fresno State - 5:30 pm

Dr. David Zetland from UC Berkeley will be the discussant/speaker.

The movie begins at 5:30pm in the new Peters Auditorium next to the Student Recreation part of the Save Mart Center.

## Audobon Society Birdhouse Building

Fresno Audubon needs folks with \*basic\* woodworking skills to construct owl and kestrel boxes for farmers across Fresno County. Boxes not only provide homes for nesting birds, they are also a low-cost/environmentally responsible means of rodent control. Plans, lumber, and other components will be supplied. Monetary and in-kind donations of materials are also welcome, but of secondary importance at this time. Look on Fresno Craigslist under "Volunteers" to respond or contact the Audobon Society of Fresno.

(above two events not sponsored by Sierra Club)

## Outing Ratings

Distance	Elevation Gain
1) up to 6 miles	A) under 1,000 feet
2) 6 to 10 miles	B) 1,000 to 2,000 feet
3) 10 to 15 miles	C) 2,000 to 3,000 feet
4) 15 to 20 miles	D) 3,000 to 4,000 feet
5) over 20 miles	E) over 4,000 feet

Our Tehipite Chapter Outings Co-Chairs are Carolyn Ordway (559) 449-7780 or jbord606@yahoo.com and Dave Wallace at wagga@comcast.net. Please contact them with any questions concerning our outings program. Contact the trip leader directly if you are interested in one of the listed trips.

Tehipite Chapter outings are free and open to the public. All leaders are unpaid volunteers assuming responsibility for a good trip, and your cooperation is mandatory. Please review additional trip and participant requirements at [www.tehipite.sierraclub.org/outings](http://www.tehipite.sierraclub.org/outings).

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

## From Macchu Picchu, Page 2

Discoveries indicate that perhaps Machu Picchu was not the lost capital of the last Incas. In this lecture during our general meeting, Dr. James S. Kus, Emeritus Professor of Geography at California State University, Fresno, will discuss what role Machu Picchu may have played within the Inca Empire. He will also discuss several controversies related to the site today. In particular, he will focus on the impact that large-scale tourism is having on the site. And he'll show a number of slides during his Powerpoint lecture that illustrate why Machu Picchu remains one of the most impressive ancient monuments in the New World. For more info, check out this website: [www.csufresno.edu/perutour](http://www.csufresno.edu/perutour)



# Population Connection President to Visit Stanislaus County

by Elaine Gorman

Thanks to the efforts of Modesto Jr. College and California State University Stanislaus biology professors, John Seager will be speaking with students and the surrounding communities of both campuses on Tuesday Sept. 22. The presentations are titled "Global Population: 6.8 Billion and Growing, Are We There Yet?" and will focus on global human population growth, impacts on the environment and society, and how we can meet the challenges ahead.

Seager, president of Population Connection (formerly Zero Population Growth), will present at Modesto Jr. College at 2:20 pm in Science 213 as part of their weekly Science Colloquium Series. He will also present at CSU Stanislaus at 7 pm in the Bernell and Flora Snider Music Recital Hall (free parking in Lot 3). This presentation is co-sponsored by the local Yokuts Sierra Club group. Both events are free.

Rapidly increasing population growth is often the over-

looked "elephant in the room" when environmental problems are discussed. Virtually every environmental crisis has its roots in population and consumption of resources: water quality/shortages, climate change, erosion and soil fertility, degradation of wildlife habitat, etc. During the Bush administration, positive developments in global population growth took a giant step backwards with the Global Gag Rule and major reductions in international family planning. The current administration has repealed the Global Gag Rule and restored/increased funds for family planning. According to the Global Health Council, each \$100 million spent on family planning results in 2.1 million unintended pregnancies avoided, 825,000 fewer abortions, and 70,000 infant deaths averted.

Local Population Connection volunteer educator Elaine Gorman is available to speak to classes, organizations, clubs, and other groups. Contact her at [goford@sbcglobal.net](mailto:goford@sbcglobal.net).

## Will Walmart Prevail in Merced?

One of the Merced Group's prime focuses this month will be the community discussions surrounding the proposed Wal-Mart distribution center, located in the City of Merced. The Final Environmental Impact Report (F.E.I.R.) was released July 30th. Free CD copies are available at the City Planning Office on W. 18th St. Hard copies can be accessed at the County library or the City Planning Office. Documents can also be downloaded at [www.cityofmerced.org](http://www.cityofmerced.org).

During the month of August the Merced City Planning Commission will have conducted public hearings and made a recommendation to the City Council regarding the project.

The City Council will then hold its own open hearings before they make a final decision. The current timeline suggests these hearings may begin around Sept. 21. We hope Sierra Club members and the community at large will actively be part of this process.

The Merced Group has many

concerns about how the distribution center will impact both the local environment and the health of Merced residents. In particular the location near three existing schools, with a fourth proposed, seems irresponsible. Recent studies have shown the deleterious effects of diesel emissions on children. Families in the many nearby residences would also be severely impacted.

Though indeed zoned industrial at one time, residential growth has been allowed to blossom in the immediate area. Also, not all industries carry the impact of 900 big rigs per day in and out of the facility, 365 days a year. Whether the focus is air quality, contamination of water run off, the control of dangerous chemicals, light and noise pollution, or traffic congestion and road deterioration this project has many impacts on our community which need to be addressed.

In these difficult economic times jobs are a top priority too. That is the major positive impact many are

hoping for. Will a significant number of the new jobs go to local citizens? At the time of this writing Wal-Mart refuses to make any such commitment.

Included in the EIR are letters submitted by agencies, groups, and individuals cataloging their thoughts about the pros and cons of the project. The document includes responses to each letter of comment which may answer your concerns--or not. The hearings are a chance for the citizens of Merced to share final thoughts and analyses with our elected officials before they make a decision on our behalf.

The Merced Sierra Club can provide some assistance in tackling this massive document and helping you locate your area of interest. If you have connections to individuals or agencies that have been involved over the years in this debate they can be a valued resource as well.

Do your civic duty--become informed--become involved.

# Merced Group

## Merced Group

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Population . . . . . open

Membership . . . . . open

## Merced Group General Meeting

*Thursday, September 17 th, 7 pm*

*The Merced Group's General Meetings are held in the fall at Sierra Presbyterian Church, 3603 M St. in Merced (corner of M St. and Yosemite Ave., across from Merced College). Meetings start at 7:00 P.M. and are finished around 8:30 or 9:00. Refreshments and friendly, thoughtful conversation provided.*

### September General Meeting

“UC Merced Research on the Lower Merced River”

**Speaker: Professor Tom Harmon**, Professor of Engineering, UC Merced & Sierra Nevada Research Institute  
Dr. Harmon has been conducting studies on the Lower Merced River for years. He has developed his own devices that he and his students use to make detailed measurements of dissolved oxygen and temperature. This data is then used to assess “stream metabolism” - a composite of plant and animal life in the river. A stretch of river like the Lower Merced has very different factors influencing its ecology compared to more “natural” river segments. Impoundments like dams, human activity along the shores, and ecological influences like invasive species disrupt the natural ecosystem continuum that runs along the length of the river. Professor Harmon’s presentation will include short movies highlighting work he and his students have done on the Lower Merced. He will also explain proposed long-term water quality monitoring stations which will be installed along the river in the near future. Water is indeed the life blood of the Valley for both its residents and its major ag industries. Come learn more about how one major river is being studied and how such information helps protect this resource.

## Conservation and Executive Committee Meetings

*Thursday, September 3rd*

*Rod Webster’s home, 7:00 P.M.*

*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. Come just to get informed or get as involved as you wish.



This photo of the Merced River shows the Stoneman Bridge. Some Park Service plans call for removal of the bridge because it is interfering with the natural flow of the river. A lot of people object to removal of the historic bridges even if they are interfering with the natural flow. The issue typifies many of the problems in managing Yosemite---there are often no easy solutions. Geroge Whitmore, chair of the Tehipite chapter’s Yosemite Park Committee, is involved with this issue and many others involving our parks.



# The Great Grizzly Bear - An Extirpated State Animal

By Jon E. Lutz, M.D.  
Bend, Oregon  
(formerly of Fresno)

The California Grizzly Bear, *Ursus arctos horribilis*, has not been seen in this state for decades, despite being declared our state animal in the 1950s. At one time the great omnivore ranged from the northernmost reaches of our state south to San Diego. It was absent only from Del Norte county in the northwest, the far northeast corner, and the Mojave Desert. At its peak, there were probably tens of thousands of them. The Golden Bear was the apex predator and the lord of the land. The Native Americans both feared and revered it. The Spanish and Mexicans in their agrarian-based societies were able to coexist with it. With the burgeoning human population



after the Gold Rush and with the advent of strychnine poison, breach-loading rifles and progressive loss of habitat, the bears' population dwindled. The last one confirmed as a grizzly bear was killed in the Santa Ana Mountains of Southern California in 1908.

There were some reliable reports from the early 1920s of what was certainly a grizzly in Sequoia National Park. After that, there were no

more. The California State legislature, out of a sense of guilt perhaps, declared it the State Animal in 1953. Through the expertise of a local law firm, on October 28th, 2008, The California Grizzly Bear Foundation was incorporated in Fresno as a non-profit public benefit corporation. The purposes of the foundation are to "provide an increase in the awareness of the importance of the reintroduction of the Grizzly Bear into California lands by focusing on the history, biology and ecology of the Grizzly Bear through education, exhibition, and scientific research." The foundation has been granted tax-exempt status under 501c3 by the IRS and also tax-exempt status under California law.

See Grizzlies, Next Page



photo by Marck Scarrut

## GOING, GOING... GONE?

Sea turtles date back nearly 90 million years and are among the Earth's oldest surviving species. All 6 species of sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Sierra Club has mounted a major effort to defend and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever.

**Help protect our animal friends; because once they're gone, they're gone. Join Sierra Club now.**

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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)

## Volunteer Corner

Welcome back from the Summer.

Two volunteer positions still needing to be filled are (1) a host for our public meetings and (2) assistant membership chair (monthly mailings).

We also still need someone to work on our Website to add information and keep it current. Also if you know of anyone who would be a good ex com candidate, elections are coming up soon.

Thanks. John Flaherty (408)464-5141

### *From Grizzlies, Previous Page*

Besides me, who serves as president, the other officers of this new conservation entity are Eric Ladenheim, a general surgeon, who serves as the secretary and Gordon Saito, CPA, Chief Financial Officer. Our foundation supports reintroduction for moral and ecological reasons. California could right a wrong done when environmental destruction was hardly an issue and, at the same time, begin to restore balance to the state's ecosystem by replacing the top predator. Moreover, restoration would boost the state's prestige and enhance tourism, thus creating tourism-related jobs.

Regarding concerns about human safety and deprivations on livestock, these concerns have been well addressed by the proponents of reintroduction of grizzlies into the Bitterroot ecosystem of Idaho. One is far more likely to drown or to die of a heart attack, or to die in a climbing accident while recreating in grizzly bear country than to suffer fatal injuries inflicted by Bruin. Radiotelemetry collars fitted to reintroduced bears would allow for preemptive management actions. Deprivations on domestic livestock could be compensated as has been done in the Rockies with the successful reintroduction of wolves.

Possibly a government agency may cosponsor with a California college or university a symposium on the California grizzly bear. Topics to be explored include why the bear went extinct, what is the progress to date with grizzly recovery elsewhere in the U.S. and what would be the scientific study requirements to determine the feasibility of its reintroduction to California. To find out more about how you can help the California Grizzly Bear Foundation contact Jon Lutz. His email is [JLutz@bmctotalcare.com](mailto:JLutz@bmctotalcare.com)

## Letter to the Editor *Serious About Water*

*By Howard Hendrix*

Kudos to Gina Padilla for her "Newcomer's Perspective" and to David Cehrs for his fine overview on "Our Unsustainable Water Demand." A bit of historical perspective for the "Perspective": Once upon a time (early 1990s) there were both water bills and metering for new construction in Fresno, but the Fresno electorate, buying into the most naive economic-libertarian arguments, voted against water meter-based billing. I remember this particularly well, because when the billing went back to flat rate, [our household] had to pay more. The fact that we used micro-spray and drip irrigation on our entirely bulbs-and-perennials landscaping in north Fresno -- and had no lawn -- meant that we used substantially less water than our neighbors and were thus billed less during that brief window when metering was the order of the day. Flat rates and no meters subsidize water-wasters, while discouraging and even penalizing those who try to be more conservative in their water use.

David Cehrs correctly notes that "Water supply is a finite resource" and "It is impossible to have infinite growth on a finite resource." His article mentions but then avoids directly confronting the other -- and tougher -- part of the equation, beyond conservation of resources: the issue of human population growth. This is much deeper than issues of borders and xenophobia. Do recall that (complaints about the "OctoMom" notwithstanding) US government policy itself has long since enshrined a naive reproductive-libertarianism by subsidizing human population growth within these United States through a tax code which provides a \$1000 credit for every child born into a household -- with no limits to those credits, no matter how many offspring a couple may choose to have, whether one or two (arguably reasonable for replacement population), or 12 (not so arguable or reasonable in a population-exploded world).

If it is hypocritical for big farmers to proclaim themselves "rugged Western individualists" while belying up to the federal and state troughs for subsidized "socialist" water, it is just as hypocritical for anyone who claims to be an environmentalist to accept government subsidies encouraging larger family sizes. Until we address both parts of the equation—not only hyperconsumption (by living more simply and using all our resources in a sustainable fashion) but also hyperpopulation (by voluntarily reducing birthrates)—all our "greening" and "water-wise usage" will amount only to spitting into the sandstorm of a coming desertification.



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Deadline for *Tehipite Topics* is the second Friday of each month. Submit material to [TehipiteTopics@gmail.com](mailto:TehipiteTopics@gmail.com)

## Sierra Club Courtright to Cliff Lake Trip Report

*By Karen Hammer*

On July 11 a group of seven campers enjoyed a sumptuous pot luck dinner from their Marmot Rock campsite overlooking Courtright Reservoir. Dinner was followed by a starlit stroll along the dam; the late moonrise meant that the stars were not eclipsed by moonlight, making it easy to identify the constellations.

In 1984 the Courtright area was designated by the Forest Service as a “Special Geological Area” due to the wide range of geologic features in a small area. In fact, within an 11-acre area it’s possible to observe nearly every stage of development of the Sierra Nevada. The stunning mountain scenery of this area was set off by a lake filled to capacity and rimmed by a magnificent display of vibrantly-colored wildflowers. Add to this mix glorious weather conditions and a good group of people, and you’ve got the makings of a wonderful weekend.

On Sunday morning the 7 campers were joined by 3 more hikers from Fresno, and the party of 10 set out for Cliff Lake. The highlight of the trip for some was jumping into Cliff Lake at 9442 feet after the 5 mile hike up. Spirits were high after the swim, but they were somewhat more subdued by the end of the additional 5 mile trek back to the cars. Time to refuel with fresh cantaloupe, watermelon and the leftover Take the Cake gourmet cupcakes. Sound good? Trip leader is considering making this a 3 day trip next year. Stay tuned!

