



# Tehipite Topics

November 2005 ❧ Vol. 51, No. 9

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

## Alaskan Adventure: Tatshenshini, Katmai, and Kenai

By Heather Anderson

My second Alaskan adventure began with a Sierra Club river trip on the Tatshenshini, with five rafts and twenty eager Sierrans. Ours was the first group to enjoy the Tat under provincial park protection. Environmentalists had worked for more than three years to achieve preservation of this remote, unspoiled river system from the proposed massive open-pit Windy Craggy Copper Mine. Waste rock and tailings would have poured out sulfuric acid, jeopardizing key fisheries downstream as well as the ecology of Glacier Bay National Park. Now, the river is protected.

It was a raft trip rich in visual imagery. The first day we were whisked by whitewater through a narrow gorge of red sandy cliffs. The cries of arctic terns and gulls melded with the sound of the fast flowing river. Bald eagles soared over the wide braided silty gray river. Above the river rose ice-clad, glacier-carved peaks thrusting a serrated shape against an Alaskan sky. Near the confluence of the Tat with the Alsek River, we camped by a vast wildflower meadow of hot pink fireweed, purple vetch, and Indian paintbrush in reds, oranges, purples, and yellows.

The end of our trip was through an other-worldly sea of sculptured icebergs, icy white to brilliant turquoise. In the background, two giant arms of the Alsek Glacier wound their way down opposing valleys and broke off



into Alsek Bay. We “took out” the next day, flew to Yakutat, then to Anchorage, an abrupt conclusion to nine beautiful days on the Tatshenshini.

Flying low over the boggy green landscape south from Anchorage, I arrived at King Salmon, and then Brooks Camp in Katmai National Park. They say that six weeks of intense salmon fishing at the mouth of the Brooks River supports the residents of King Salmon for an entire year. For many, Katmai is a bear-watching mecca. Bears line up across Brooks Falls waiting for salmon to leap up the falls, and occasionally into bears’ hungry mouths, while tourists through the viewing platforms, clicking away on cameras. The Park Service laments the record number of summer visitors, which outstrip the limited overnight

facilities of lodge and campground. They also fear problems from the close contact between bears and people, especially anglers. Some environmentalists believe that heavy tourist traffic is unhealthy for bears, causing them not to reproduce as well.

My campsite was adjacent to that of a large group of anglers and photographers, and for two evenings I enjoyed their gift of campfire-grilled salmon. The highlight at Katmai was a hike up Dumpling Mountain, appropriately named for its lumpy shape. Although cold, windy and misty, it was a veritable tundra garden of moss, lichen, and flowers, with fleeting glimpses of ptarmigan and plover. The view from the top of a cold-blue landscape was dominated by two immense glacial lakes.

See *Alaska*, page 4



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# November General Meeting

November 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M.  
University of California Center  
550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno  
(across from Fashion Fair)

**“Gwiii Haanas”**

*presented by Helen Gigliotti*

See back page for details.

## Upcoming Chapter

### General Meeting Presentations

**December 14<sup>th</sup>**

Kevin Hall: Very Important Updates on Fresno’s Air Quality and Measure C.

### Dinner Date with the Speaker

Meet at the Imperial Gardens Restaurant at 5:15 for our monthly no-host “Dinner Date with the Speaker,” an opportunity to interact with fellow Sierrans.

6640 N. Blackstone, east side, just south of Herndon.

### Important Measure C Discussion

Fresno County Measure C is an issue of increasing concern. It will be discussed in depth at the upcoming ExCom meeting. All members are strongly encouraged to attend.

Conservation/ExCom meeting, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 P.M.  
University of California Center, 550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno.

## **Merced Group**

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### **Population**

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

## **Merced Group**

### **Conservation and Executive Committee Meeting**

Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M at Rod Webster's home, 345 E. 20<sup>th</sup> St., Merced.

### **General Meeting**

Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 P.M.  
Sierra Presbyterian Church, 3603 M St.  
(M St. and Yosemite Ave., across from Merced College)

Program information was not available at time of publication. It will be posted at [www.tehipite.sierraclub.org/Groups/Merced/](http://www.tehipite.sierraclub.org/Groups/Merced/) as soon as it is available. Or you may call one of the Group Executive Committee members.

### **Outings**

See the Tehipite Chapter's listings. Phone Rod Webster at (209) 723-4747 if you would like to coordinate carpooling with others from our area.

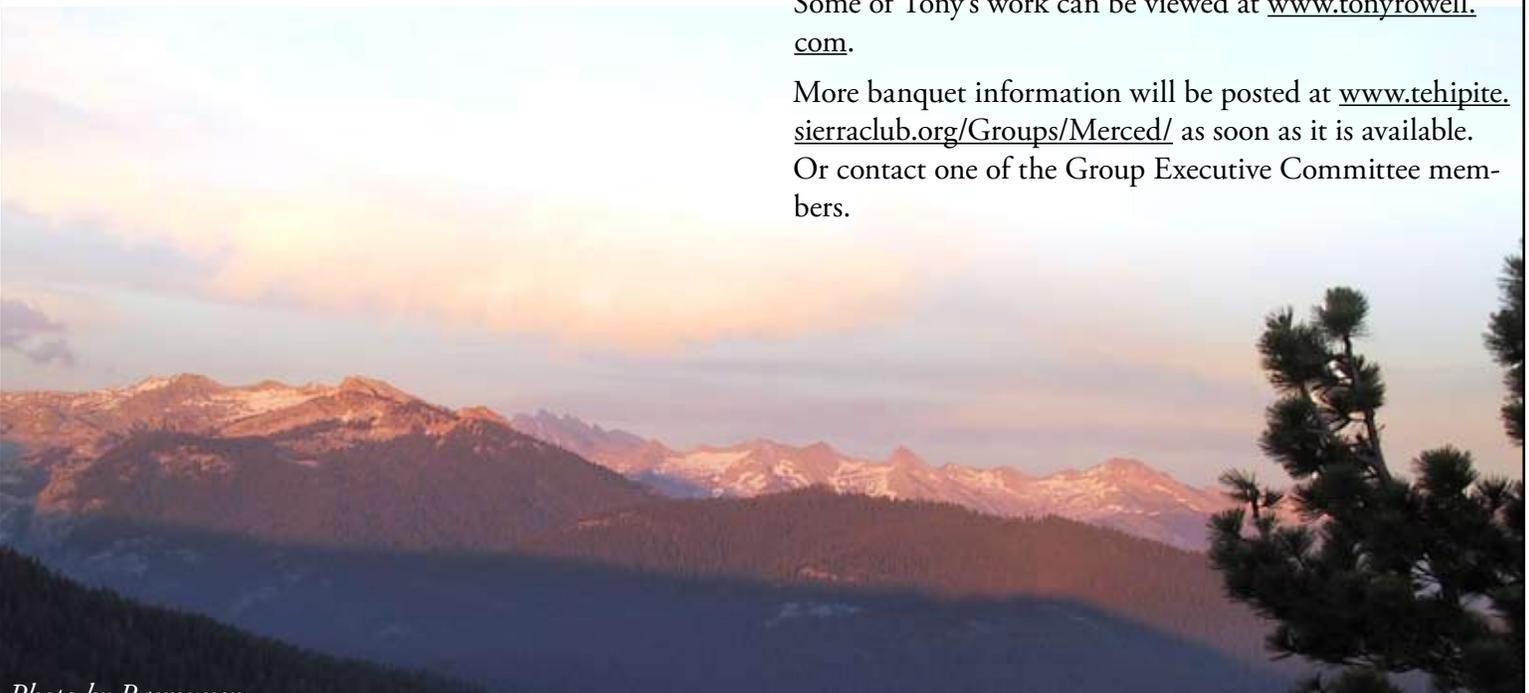
### **Annual Banquet**

Mark your calendars for the Merced Group's Annual Banquet, the evening of Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at the Branding Iron Restaurant in Merced.

### *Tony Rowell*

will share stunning imagery by his father, Galen Rowell, followed by slides of his own travels. These will include photos from trips to the Arctic Circle, hiking the John Muir Trail, and his latest adventure to China and Tibet. Tony's images have been published in calendars, books, and magazines such as *Backpacker* and *Outdoor Photographer*. He is the Vice President of Mountain Light Photography, a member of the Sierra Club, and serves on the advisory board for the Rowell award and the Rowell fund for Tibet. Tony recently moved to Bishop, CA to be closer to the photo opportunities of the majestic Eastern Sierra. Fine art prints and calendars will be available for purchase. Some of Tony's work can be viewed at [www.tonyrowell.com](http://www.tonyrowell.com).

More banquet information will be posted at [www.tehipite.sierraclub.org/Groups/Merced/](http://www.tehipite.sierraclub.org/Groups/Merced/) as soon as it is available. Or contact one of the Group Executive Committee members.



*Photo by Rasmussen*

# GOING, GOING... GONE?



Sea turtles date back nearly 90 million years and are among the Earth's oldest surviving species. Yet the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle is quickly fading away—it is losing its habitat at an alarming rate. At the Sierra Club, we've mounted a major campaign to defend the Endangered Species Act and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever.

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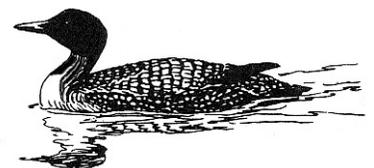
## *Alaska, from page 1*

Katmai was declared a national monument shortly after the cataclysmic 1912 volcanic eruption, which buried forty square miles of lush valley under as much as 700 feet of volcanic ash. The eruption darkened the sky in Kodiak, resulted in acid rain as far away as Vancouver, and left thousands of fumaroles. These died out twenty years later, but the event left the park a designated wilderness area. It is still called the Valley of the Ten Thousand Smokes.

Back in Anchorage, I connected with Vicky Hoover, editor of Sierra Club's *Alaska Report*, and we flew by pontoon plane to Montague Island, off the east coast of the Kenai Peninsula. Parts of that wilderness island were slated to be logged and we went to see for ourselves. Flying over snow-streaked jagged peaks, then over the Harding ice field, we saw a glacier as it flowed down a valley and broke off into Icy Bay. We landed on Stump Lake (which we renamed Loon Lake for the nightly loon calls) in front of our Log Jam Bay cabin, one of several Forest Service cabins on the island. Next day, we cut cross-country through virgin meadows of grasses, berries, mosses, heather, and water lily clogged ponds.

Aside from the ever-present bear tracks, we saw a doe with two fawns and a merganser mother with babies on her back. We found the bulldozer and the six mile all weather road, two years in the making, from which they were to start cutting the following Monday. Why should we save the pristine beauty of this wilderness island? Logging companies in the "lower 48" have perhaps asked this question as they succeeded in destroying all but five to ten percent of our old growth forest, upset the ecology, and devastated the biodiversity. Our hope is to do better in Alaska.

What do I remember most from my Alaskan adventure? Giant glacier arms flowing to the icy bay, a sea of sculptured icebergs, and the call of the loon on our lake. The midnight sun and pale twilight sky hung with a partial moon, and playful otters cavorting in the shallow surf, tipped with pink reflections of the night-long sunset. ❧



# Sierra Summit 2005

by Don Gaede

I went to the Summit as our chapter's Outings Delegate, so I felt duty-bound to join an Outing as soon as the Amtrak bus dropped me at Market and Powell. Lo and behold, in an hour I found myself in a group of twenty people, from about twenty-one different states, following our leader onto a light rail train to Golden Gate Park. The sun was hiding that day, but the park nevertheless displayed her subdued beauty. As we traversed the six miles from the Tea Garden to the Pacific Ocean, it was great fun to talk to fellow Clubbers from all over the country. Après hike, we had dinner at the ocean-view Brewery restaurant. We talked about some of the outings that other chapters offered. I had to stifle my urge to gloat over the great hiking opportunities we Tehipitans have, compared to most other chapters.

The lady sitting next to me, involved in setting up the convention, was amazed that more members of the Sierra Club hadn't signed up for the Summit, considering the high caliber of guest speakers and other attractions. I couldn't have agreed more.

One of the Sierra Club priorities identified by us delegates was that of seeking new allies and building coalitions. Consonant with that goal, one of the seminars was entitled *Hunting and Angling for Solutions: How Hikers and Kayakers Can Find Common Ground with Hunters and Anglers*. The speakers included Mary Stange, author of *Woman the Hunter*. She noted that 10% of hunters are of her gender. Although a few environmentalists are opposed to all hunting and even fishing, she argued that hunting and fishing have value for many people, if for no other reason than to "know where your food is coming from." The

night before, Bill Maher had joked about President Bush's cowboy outfit: "Doesn't he know we don't have any more cowboys?" But Joel Webster of the Bitterroot Mission group in Montana pointed out that he knows quite a few cowboys who wouldn't be laughing at that joke; many of these cowboys share our environmental views.

Frequent applause interrupted Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s speech on Saturday morning. He is one of the late "Bobby" Kennedy's eleven children, and was named one of *Time* magazine's "Heroes for the Planet" for his success helping Riverkeeper lead the fight to restore the Hudson River. His recent book, subtitled "How George W. Bush and his Corporate Pals Are Plundering the Country and Hijacking Our Democracy," doesn't make him sound like a man interested in forming alliances with Republicans. But in his travels, Kennedy has found many "Teddy Roosevelt" Republicans that share his environmental views.

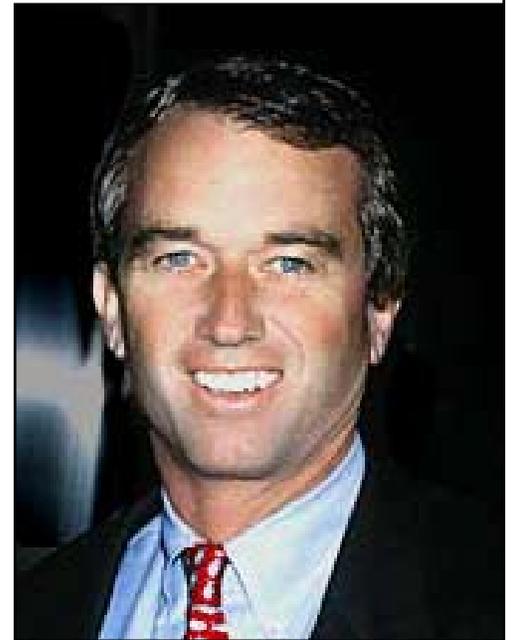
He related how he and his dad used to go hiking in the Olympic National Park with William O. Douglas, the same Supreme Court justice who wrote the ground-breaking dissent in *Sierra Club v. Morton*. (In 1972, the Sierra Club sued to stop the Disney Corporation from developing Mineral King into a ski resort. Douglas argued that, in a sense, the trees and rocks of Mineral King had legal standing to sue Disney.)

Kennedy eloquently connected spirituality with concern for the natural world. I think these are the type of words and thoughts our movement needs, that will help us form alliances with faith groups. To quote him, "I don't believe that nature is God or

that we ought to be worshipping it as God, but I do believe that it's the way that God communicates to us most forcefully. God talks to human beings through many vectors. Through each other, through organized religions, through wise people, and through the great books of those religions. Through art and literature and music and poetry. But nowhere with such force and clarity and detail and texture and grace and joy as through creation."

"We don't know Michelangelo by reading his biography. We know him by looking at the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. And we know our Creator best by immersing ourselves in creation. And particularly wilderness, which is the undiluted work of the Creator."

He was interrupted again by enthusiastic applause. ✂



*Interviews with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and other speakers at the Sierra Summit are available at [www.sierrasummit2005.org/interviews/](http://www.sierrasummit2005.org/interviews/).*



# Outings Schedule

## November 5<sup>th</sup> - Saturday

Day Hike (2A)  
Pincushion Ridge.  
Hike to a mesa above Millerton  
Lake.

*Don Redmond*  
(559) 268-1537

## November 13<sup>th</sup> - Sunday

Trail Run (2A)  
Delilah Lookout, off hwy. 180

in Sequoia National Forest.  
Six-mile out-and-back along an old  
dirt road, mildly rolling terrain,  
nice view of the Kings River  
canyon.

Runners and walkers of all abilities  
welcome.

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



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.

### FEATURED PROGRAMS

**NOVEMBER 24 Traditional Thanksgiving Dinner** Start the ski season off early and relax in the family-like atmosphere of the Lodge on this holiday weekend.

**DECEMBER 31 New Year's Eve Party** A wonderful and festive tradition at Clair Tappaan.

**JANUARY 6-8, FEBRUARY 10-12, MARCH 24-26 Bay Area Ski Bus Trips** Ride in comfort from Oakland to Clair Tappaan. Price: \$175 members, \$200 non-members, \$140 children (includes lodging/meals).

**JANUARY 6-8, MARCH 10-12 Kids Ski Weekends** Start kids off right with lessons and short trips on CTL trails. Price: \$125/child (includes equipment rental/lodging/meals).

**FEBRUARY 3-5 Snow Camping Skills Course** Price: \$145 members, \$170 non-members

**FEBRUARY 17-19, MARCH 24-26 Snowshoe Ecology Tours** Enjoy guided snowshoe day tours and broaden your knowledge of alpine ecology. Price: \$145 members, \$170 non-members (includes lodging/meals).

**MARCH 17-19 Snow Camping Trip** Price: \$145 members, \$170 non-members



For more information about these 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.

## 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?** Do you have a favorite hike you would like to share with fellow outdoor lovers? 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, e-mail or phone Richard Sloan at [RiverRich1509@aol.com](mailto:RiverRich1509@aol.com) or (559) 696-2971. Richard will organize a dinner for interested members. Current Outings Leaders please contact Richard with your proposed hikes.

*Facing page: On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, John Cameron led this beautiful hike to Coyote Lake, via Brewer, Tocher, and Beryl Lakes. Photos by John Cameron.*



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December *Tehipite Topics* deadline Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>.



## November General Meeting

### *“Gwaii Haanas”*

*presented by Helen Gigliotti*

November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at 7:00 P.M.

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

Helen Gigliotti is a retired Professor of Biochemistry and administrator at Fresno State and an avid international traveler and photographer. Recent trips to Mongolia, Antarctica, Borneo, India, and Madagascar have resulted in slideshows and photographic exhibits in the local community.

Join Helen as we board the schooner *Copper Sky* for a sailing adventure amongst the northwest Canadian Queen Charlotte Islands. Although these islands are a land of great natural beauty, boasting some of the world’s biggest trees, Canada’s largest population of bald eagles, and a rich tapestry of intertidal and sea life, our focus will be the islands of Gwaii Haanas, home to the native Haida people and their richly artistic culture for more than 10,000 years. We will visit, by sea, the major “ghost villages” of the Haida, including the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ninstints, where the world’s finest collection of totem poles still stands majestically decaying. Walking the paths of these villages is said by many to be a profound spiritual experience.