



Tehipite Topics

April 2009 ♪ Vol. 55, No. 4

www.tehipite.sierraclub.org

Danger: Green Aliens Infest Local Waterways

*By Glory Warner
Student Sierra High/Sierra Club
Member*

An alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm is often called “invasive.” Introduced plants threaten the diversity and abundance of native plants and animals.

Most exotic plants are spread unintentionally. Others have been introduced purposely, without an understanding of the potential consequences of those species. This occurs most commonly with plants used for garden ornamentals (CDFG website).

One of the most prominent introduced weed species in California is the *Arundo donax*. Common names include bamboo reed, giant cane or false bamboo. This species was introduced as an ornamental plant in the 1800s. Perhaps the early spread came from some idyllic residence along the river, where the plant was unwisely allowed to flourish unchecked. The alien took off down the river to stake a new plot of land by the riverbank! Now we have an infestation. Once established, false bamboo will consume large quantities of water

before drying out and creating a fire danger. This large grass reaches up to 30 feet tall in large clumps along lakes, rivers, streams and other wet areas. *Arundo* spreads by sending out runners from the main plant. These runners, or rhizomes, can float downstream and establish new infestations.

The plant is known to choke out other native species due to its rapid growth and dense stands. It provides limited food and habitat for native wildlife. The dense stands of *Arundo* can increase erosion problems along waterways.

Most troubling is the fact that the invader uses up to three times as much water as native plants, thus altering water availability in some areas. Removal techniques include manual chopping, pulling out roots and covering the plant with a tarp to keep sunshine from reaching it. Staff of the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust tackle patches of *Arundo* with the help of volunteers (SJRPT).

As a participant in one such removal excursion, I can attest to the difficulty of removal. The dense stands are cut one cane at a time and each cluster can contain thousands of canes. The thin, brittle



From left: Volunteers Ray Warner, David Palecek and True Warner work at removing Arundo Donax along the San Joaquin River

stalks and leaves can cut the hands badly if protective gloves are not used. Lack of gloves and sharp tools didn't make removal easier. Insufficient funds and support are cited by crew leaders.

Riparian areas, like the riverbed where we were working this last January, are crucial breeding and feeding areas for common and endangered birds. Most species of birds don't use the plant because it supports few insects, so food supply for birds is poor. As populations of the giant reed increase, native bird populations decrease (CNPS).

See Plant Invaders, back page

Chapter General Meeting

Forestry Restoration Project

Wednesday, April 15th at 7:00 pm
 University of California Center
 550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno - (across from Fashion Fair)

This year's Tehipite Chapter's Conservation Award Recipients Raymond Laclergue and Bonnie Bladen will present a power point presentation about their forestry restoration project on 240 acres at Grand Bluffs, near Dinkey Creek, 6 miles east of Shaver Lake. The site was purchased in 2003 to save the land from being developed and has gone through various stages of treatment to restore it to pre-contact conditions. Laclergue and Bladen are a husband and wife team, and owners of the Intermountain Nursery in Prather. A Discussion period will follow. Refreshments served. All are welcome!

Conservation & Executive Committees

Wednesday, April 8th, at 7:00 P.M.
 University of California Center, 550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno

Volunteer Corner

No more cookies? This may be our fate at our general meetings. Rae Marx, who has been helping out for years, is leaving as hospitality volunteer. This can be a fun job and only takes a few hours a month. Anyone interested? Thanks Rae. You will be missed.

John Flaherty



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Merced Group General Meeting

Thursday, April 16th, 7 pm

Same "New" Location

Golden Valley Health Center

737 W. Childs, Merced - (cross street is "N")

We will meet in the classroom located in the Dental Building. Just park in the lots on N St. or 4th St. and follow the signs. The Health Center campus is well lit at night and there is security on patrol all evening so it is a very secure and inviting location. Third Thursday of each month. Meetings start at 7:00 P.M. and are usually over by 8:30 or so.

Conservation and Executive Committee Meetings

Thursday, April 2th

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.

Topic for April General Meeting:

"Two for One"- the Merced Bicycle Coalition and Valley Voices Writers' Club both present.

The mission of **Merced Bicycle Coalition** is: "making our community safer, our air cleaner, and our citizens healthier by promoting bicycling as a safe and normal means of everyday transportation." The coalition began as an informal group of individuals who just liked to share a ride around town. It has since evolved into an active community outreach and bicycle advocacy group. Come hear from its representatives about outings they have on tap, service projects being considered, and details on the City's new Bicycle Advisory Commission. The coalition still hosts family-friendly rides on Wednesday evenings (meet at 5:30 at Bob Hart Square downtown) and Saturday mornings (10:00 at the farmer's market on N St. between 18th and 19th).

April is National Poetry Month. Merced High School poets from the **Valley Voices Writers' Club Project** will present their poems. This year's theme is TURNING THE TIDE. Students have traveled to Happy Isles in Yosemite with poet James Downs, the upper and lower Merced River, and learned the blues with poet/musician Brandon Cesmat. They have focused on Gandhi's philosophy that "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." You won't want to miss the opportunity to listen to and be inspired by these talented poets. The 10th Annual Valley Voices Poetry Festival will be at the Merced High School Theatre from on April 24th. Contact Valley Voices director, Ocean Jones, for more information, 723-9600.



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.

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 Zip _____ Phone (____) _____
 Email _____

**Join today and receive
a FREE Sierra Club
Weekender Bag!**



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 Please charge my: Visa Mastercard AMEX
 Cardholder Name _____
 Card Number _____
 Exp. Date ____/____/____

Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
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,
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or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

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Book Review

Tom Lynch, *Xerophilia: Ecocritical Explorations in Southwestern Literature* (Texas Tech University, 2008). Cloth. \$35.00. paperback coming

By Richard Wiebe - Member of Tehipite Chapter & Research Associate, Museum of Northern Arizona

The Oxford English Dictionary defines xerophilous as “adapted to a dry climate or habitat, or to conditions of scanty available moisture.” With less than 12” of rain per season, the Great Central Valley qualifies as an arid land.

Tom Lynch has written a literary study of xerophilia writers like Edward Abbey, Charles Bowden, Ann Zwinger, Mary Austin, and Terry Tempest Williams. Occasionally a book is published that summarizes a literary movement and makes a significant contribution to that movement. Lynch’s *Xerophilia* is such a book. The movement is ecocriticism. Ecocriticism, according to Lynch, “is the study of the manifold interrelationships between literature—a human expressive activity—and the natural world that provides the matrix in which the expressive activity occurs.”

Lynch argues that bioregionalism ought to become the touchstone for literary study, especially the literature of the American southwest which is itself made up of numerous bioregions. These include the Great Basin Desert, the Colorado River Desert, the Sonoran Desert, the Colorado Plateau, the Chuska Range and the San Juan Mountains.

Mary Austin is cited as one of the earliest writers who “got over the color green” (as Wallace Stegner put it) in her writings *The Land of Jour-*

neys’ Ending and *The Land of Little Rain*, Lynch argues that the English language was formed by a hydro-landscape, a topography of moisture and green plants and lawns, and it takes a deliberate effort to write back against this bias. One strategy is to employ indigenous and Spanish words in descriptions of the landscape—words like arroyo, barranca, llano, cañon, and cañada for example. In *The Land of Little Rain*, Mary Austin writes, “Ute, Paiute, Mojave, and Shoshone inhabit its frontiers, and as far into the hear of it as a man dare go. Not the law, but the land sets the limit.” Lynch notes that there are additional meanings of bioregionalism. It is also an economic and political concept focusing on the local rather than the global, or even the continental. A preference for locally grown food, trade with the local small business economy, and direct involvement in politics mark bioregionalism as a social movement as well as a naturalistic attitude.

Bioregionalism is also a scientific category. Following the observation by John Wesley Powell that the land west of the 100th meridian was dryer than the Midwest and the East, it can be argued that a watershed is the best political unit of management in the West. Lynch examines the historic Spanish acequia irrigation system as an micro example of this concept. It is often said that western politics is water politics, and there is merit in this assertion. Watersheds are a handy scientific unit for understanding the natural world and the interface of the natural world with the political economy of a region.

See next page

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.

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.

Mary Austin captured the irony of the situation in *The Land of Little Rain* when she wrote, in the chapter "Other Water Borders," "it is the proper destiny of every considerable stream in the west to become an irrigating ditch." Lynch's interpretations of South-west writers like Abbey, Zwinger, Nabhan, Bowden, Williams and host of others is first-rate. Inevitably some authors had to be left out. I would have included Barry Lopez and Cormac McCarthy, but I have seldom found a book packed with so much insight and suggestive ideas. Read it and then read around in the literature he discusses. You will be amply rewarded.

Outings Schedule

April 4th - Saturday

Day Hike (1A) Easy

From Bass Lake we take the Willow Creek Trail past

Devils Slide to Angel Falls

Don Redmond (559) 268-1537

April 10 - 12, Friday - Sunday

Car camp and Service trip

This is a service trip in the Diablo Range south of Pinnacles, organized by Vicki Hoover, chair of the Sierra Club Wilderness committee. Vicki lives in San Francisco, and despite her age, is one of the most active Sierra Club members. She leads two or three service trips each year to various wilderness areas. Saturday will be a work day with an easy hike on Sunday. This is one of the only times we get a chance to work with Vicki in our area.

Meals are provided (nominal cost) and we spend time in a great outdoor location. Spend Easter with other conservationists.

John Flaherty (408) 464-5141

Saturday, April 25, Day Hike 1A

Yokuts Spring Hike Along the River

4-mile easy hike along the Tuolumne River from Legion Park. Meet at the parking lot by American Legion Hall (1001 S. Santa Cruz Ave.) in Modesto at 9:30 AM. Bring good walking shoes and water.

Dogs and children welcome.

Contact leader Dorothy Griggs (209)549.9155.

Saturday to Monday May 23-25 Memorial Weekend Backpack (Yokuts)

This trip is a fine introduction to High Sierra backpacking. Burgson Lake is just a 3.5 mile hike from the trailhead north of Highway 120 near the Clark Fork Road. The lake is small but in a beautiful setting. On Sunday the options are to hike to nearby dramatic Sword Lake or hang out around Burgson. We'll be back to the vehicles by noon on Monday. If you'd like to come but are short on equipment we can help out. A preparation meeting will be held one week prior. Trip maximum is 10.

Yokuts co-leaders are Jerry Jackman, 209.577.5616 or jjackman@sbcglobal.net, and Derek Castle.

Calendar:

Earth Day and John Muir's B'day in April

April 21 is John Muir's Birthday
Sierra Club founder (1892) John Muir spent lots of time exploring the nearby Central Sierras and is largely responsible for the preservation of Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia as National Parks (1890), and for leading the preservation movement generally. Muir is widely known as the "Father of the National Parks." He said of Yosemite, "No temple made with hands can compare with Yosemite." In 1903 Muir spent several days camping in the Yosemite wilderness with President Theodore Roosevelt. The two reportedly talked around the campfire long into the night, and the President never forgot this experience. Please take a few moments on Muir's birthday to reflect on his legacy and his example of a life devoted to the preservation of our natural heritage of wilderness.

April 17 North Fork will kick off their Earth Day celebration at the **North Fork Tribal Community Center** with the premier of the film *Living Death Valley*, which features time-lapse photography of spring in Death Valley. The musical score is by North Fork local musician John Kilburn.

April 18 & 19 The Fresno Metropolitan Museum will celebrate Earth Day from 11 AM to 4 PM. Eco-friendly family activities in the Michaelis Classroom led by museum educators to help inspire awareness and appreciation for the environment. All materials will be supplied. Free with museum admission.

April 18 Celebrate Earth Day in Yosemite—food from sustainable and organic salad bar, vendor tables with environmental products. Find out what's being done to keep the Park 'green' on a guided tour around Yosemite Valley." More information at <http://www.yosemitepark.com>

April 18 - Fresno Solar Tour - Join neighbors, educators, students and business owners from around the valley for a learning experience which provides access to working examples of solar technologies. Pick up free resources, and hear from solar experts and environmental advocates. At each site you will be met by a host (owner and/or solar installer) ready to explain the installation and answer questions. Doors open at 10:00 am. Tour sites close at 4:00 pm. Claude Laval WET Incubator, 2911 E. Barstow Ave., Fresno - Contact tom@fresno-solartour.com for more information. Tickets \$10 (\$5 off tour day registration) Students and educators can pre-register online for free.

April 18 Aquarius Aquarium Institute presents its annual **Earth Day Run For the Reef and Water Planet Adventure Day**, a non-competitive Run/Walk and Earth Day celebration, on Saturday, at The Shops at River Park until 1pm.

April 19 North Fork Earth Day Celebration, 9am-4pm, at the North Fork School and the Tribal Community Center. There will be displays, events, art, music, including a drumming circle and story-telling by tribal elders. Vendors can set up booths for \$20; non-profit booths are free. Contact nporan@aol.com or northforkrancheria-nsn.gov or (559) 877-2421

April 19 & 21 Clean-up on the San Joaquin River at the Ball Ranch and maybe Ledger Island. Bring wire cutters, bolt cutters, shovel or metal fence post jacks if you have them. Starts at 9 AM. Contact Richard Sloan at (559)696-2971. More info: www.river-treevolunteers.org/

April 23 Renewal - A film about increasing activism among faith communities. Presented by the Interfaith Social Justice Collaborative. Light refreshments at 6:30 pm and film at 7:00 PM - Free - Hope Lutheran Church at 364 E Barstow Ave. If childcare needed, call (559)225-2547.

April 23 (No confirmation on this yet, so check first) **Go Green Day at Fresno City College**—there will be information booths and activities. No charge for organizations setting up booths. Stephanie@netptc.com

April 25 The Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno will present an Earth Day Celebration, "Building an Ethical Economy...One Dollar at a Time" at 2672 E. Alluvial Avenue (between Chestnut and Willow). Outdoor exhibits begin at 2 PM. Ellis Jones will speak from 3-4:30 PM on his book *The Better World Shopping Guide*, Tickets are \$5. Copies of his book will be available for \$11. For more information call (559) 332-6146 or visit: <http://www.uufresno.org>

April 25 "Generation Green" Youth Serve Day 8:30 to 1 pm - Sponsored by HandsOn Central California. Calling all youth for a day of service to Fresno. Tree Fresno, The River Parkway Trust, and The Sierra Foothill Conservancy are collaborating on a series of projects for the day: planting 30 trees, river restoration and more. The event starts with breakfast at the River Center from 8:30 to 9 am. Call (559)237-3101.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

A Response to Last Month's Feature, "Big, Old Trees, Or the Needs of Science?"

By Howard V. Hendrix

As long-time Tehipite chapter Sierra Club members who live south of Shaver Lake in Pine Ridge, my wife and I read with interest the article "Big, Old Trees or Needs of Science?" by Rich Kangas (Tehipite Topics, April 2009). The story of the felling of the Prometheus bristlecone which Mister Kangas retells is reminiscent of the Japanese whaling industry's long contravention of International Whaling Commission rules under the justification that its annual take of whales is for "scientific" purposes.

In attacking science, however, Mr. Kangas is going after the wrong enemy. Instead, he should have criticized pseudoscience in the service of narrow special interest agendas, which has too often been allowed to mask as "science."

Unfortunately, the author then goes on to engage in the same abuse of science for which he criticizes those who cut down the Prometheus bristlecone. The author never defines what he means by "big, old trees." What ages or diameters is he talking about? In his sixth paragraph he defines large old-growth trees as "very oldest or very biggest," and then redefines them as just "bigger or older."

Finally, he remarks that the "real reason" for any timber removal "behind many of the new reasons [to prevent disease, to prevent fire, to promote wildlife, to thin the forest, to restore the ecosystems, to remove hazard] is greed and profit," it's clear that he has redefined "large old trees" yet again, to include essentially all trees.

The author fails to take into account the history of much of the forest land in our region of the Sierra Nevada, which has suffered from over a century of misguided logging practices and many decades of equally misguided fire-suppression policies.

My wife and I live on 12 acres forested with pines, oaks, and cedars. We have removed trees for all those "new reasons" -- to prevent disease and fire, to promote wildlife, to thin the forest, to restore the ecosystem, to remove hazard -- which the author attacks as motivated by "greed and profit."

Profit hasn't been our experience. If anything we're considerably deeper in debt -- witness our \$3300 tab for machine mastication of overcrowded cedars and manzanita on our property in 2008 alone. We have indeed profited in non-financial ways, however. As a result of our work and

expense, the forest around our home is in better condition, less prone to fire, supports more wildlife, is less overcrowded, is closer to what the ecosystem was before 1850, and is less hazardous overall.

Living in and with the forest, we know that -- given the history -- banning all tree removal as motivated by "greed and profit" is as wrong-headed as treating the forest as mere plantation and clear-cutting it. The forests have already suffered enough from misguided logging and fire suppression policies. The results of such mismanagement should not be compounded by an equally misguided policy of absolutist preservation, which fails to take into account the actual history in the trees themselves.

Old-growth trees are, in the end, precisely about history. One of their great values is that they encode time and what has happened in the forest over the centuries. The answers will not come from pseudoscience masquerading as science in the name of anyone's agenda. The hard work of forest preservation and forest restoration will require careful thought and subtle decision-making.

Howard V. Hendrix is a local writer and scholar whose titles include Lightpaths and Standing Wave. He is on the editorial board of Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval Studies. Visit his web site at www.HowardVHendrix.com.

EARTH DAY REFLECTION

By Heather Anderson

Go to a park, a hilltop, a river, meadow, or even your garden to celebrate inwardly for this unique planet, a planet with amazing diversity, incredible beauty, and the most intricate ecological web-of-life. Rachel Carson called her experience with the Earth A Sense of Wonder. Author Barry Lopez (1998) wrote simply: "We have taken the most obvious kind of wealth from this continent and overlooked the more lasting, the more valuable and sustaining experience of intimacy with it, the spiritual dimension of a responsible involvement with this place." Think of our great heritage of natural landscapes, our collection of public lands which belong to each of us as an American citizen.

Think of what you have done and what you can still do to cherish and protect.



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Deadline for *Tehipite Topics* is the second Friday of each month. Submit material to TehipiteTopics@gmail.com

from *Plant Invaders*, front page

Another water-guzzling exotic invader of the San Joaquin River is the Tamarix, which is also known as Salt Cedar. It is believed to have showed up in the 1820's - also as an ornamental. It produces beautiful flowers and was used in landscaping. It tends to replace such species as cottonwood and willows. This shrubby tree can grow up to 25 feet tall. It is mostly known for its immense water consumption - up to 300 gallons a day. Its roots are able to go deep enough to tap into the water table, and when it invades small streams or springs, they have been known to dry up completely. (SJR PCT). For those of you who rely on a well for your water supply, beware, the Tamarix has deep penetrating roots!

Salt cedar is extremely hardy; it is quite difficult to control through conventional mechanical or chemical means. New salt cedar grows up from cut stumps. Some biological (beetle) controls are being tested now for potential public use. For more information, see Tamarisk Coalition.



*Tamarisk in Fallon Nevada
 Wetland Environments
 J.S. Aber and T.A. Eddy*