



Tehipite Topics

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Jesse Morrow – A Mountain Under Siege

by Kay Barnes

The expression “making a mountain out of a mole hill” is a familiar one. Unfortunately, its opposite may become familiar to us if R.M.C, a sand and gravel corporation headquartered in London, is able to muscle its way to a Fresno County conditional use permit to produce gravel and aggregate products from a Fresno County landmark mountain.

The landmark to be “downsized” is Jesse Morrow Mountain, fifteen miles east of Fresno. Jesse Morrow is one of two sentinel mountains on either side of Kings Canyon Highway (Highway 180), the Blossom Trail road which makes the transition from the flat valley floor to the foothills of Fresno County and the higher mountains of the Sierra beyond.

R.M.C. has prepared a proposal which describes in some detail their plans to turn Jesse Morrow into rubble. The company plans to extract the bedrock by blasting and constructing “benches”. Benches are wide tracks which will

look like bare rock stair treads and risers from Highway 180. Before the benches are blasted into place, the “overburden”—overburden is minerspeak for topsoil supporting grasses and other vegetation—is removed. The benching process will begin at the top of the mountain and succeeding levels will be blasted into place as rock in each bench is removed. The rock will then be taken, by truck and a conveyor belt system, to a crusher at the processing plant on a lower level. Since the mining will begin at the upper level of the mountain, the conveyer belt system, as well as the haul road and the large vehicles on it, will be visible from Kings Canyon Highway throughout the life of the mine. The mine is to be in place for a hundred years.

The blasting required to loosen the rock and construct the benches and roads will “likely” occur two to three times a week between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. and may occur after 4:00 P.M. But throughout the company proposal

See Jesse Morrow, page 5





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May General Meeting

“Costa Rica: From the Clouds to the Coast”

presented by Don Redmond

May 11th at 7:00 P.M.

NEW LOCATION!

University of California Center
550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno
(across from Fashion Fair)

Don is an avid international traveler who has visited more than fifty countries. In recent years, his focus has been on Latin American countries. He has explored the rainforests of Belize (4 times), Peru (3 times) and Costa Rica (3 times). These visits aid in his teaching as a docent with our Chaffee Zoo. Don will present his video of Costa Rica’s famed Monteverde Cloud Forests, where he visited last spring, then take us to the sunny Pacific coastal beaches for a dazzling review of birds, mammals, reptiles and plant life. Previous trips included horse and canopy-cable rides, whitewater rafting and mud baths. The country’s good care of these wonders, noted friendliness, and lack of an army or income tax draw many visitors and immigrants. Don’t miss this great program!

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Population

Tammy Johnson (559) 665-5507

Merced Group

Merced Group Conservation and Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 12th at 7:00 P.M.

Rod Webster's home, 345 E. 20th St., Merced

No general meeting this month in lieu of picnic.

Annual Picnic

Saturday, May 14th, 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

Pitman backyard, 2832 E. Arden Lane, Merced (east off McKee, one block north of Bear Creek.)

Potluck—bring whatever. It will truly be “potluck”. We've never been disappointed!

Bring your own table service. Barbeque available for cooking. Iced tea provided; bring other beverages as desired.

Questions? Phone Marsh at (209) 723-2986 or Rod at (209) 723-4747.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Sierra Summit 2005

The Sierra Club's first-ever National Environmental Convention & Expo

September 8-11, 2005
The Moscone Center
San Francisco, CA



Register Now!

www.sierrasummit2005.org

Sierra Summit 2005 Delegate Election

In the April 2005 *Tehipite Topics* we announced the Sierra Club's first ever National Environmental Convention and Expo, The Sierra Summit 2005.

There will be a total of six delegates attending this event from our chapter. Five of those delegates will be appointed by the Executive Committee, and one will be elected by the Chapter. This election will take place at the June General Meeting on June 8, 2005. If you would like to participate in this election, please attend. If you are interested in being one of the appointed delegates, please contact one of the following committee members assigned to this process:

Aimee Leyva (559) 438-8670

Ron Mackie (559) 683-0293

JoAnne Armstrong (209) 726-0636

To register or find out more information on Sierra Summit go to www.sierrasummit2005.org.

Central California Regional Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Fair

by Don Gaede

On March 17, Gerald Vinnard and Don Gaede visited the Central California Regional Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Fair. After scrutinizing many well-done science projects and talking to several of the students, the judges selected Ashley Murheid (senior division) and Lauren Grazier (junior division) to receive cash awards for their work in environmental studies. Don Gaede interviewed Ashley recently.

First, please tell me again the title of your research project, and what year you are in at Clovis West.

I'm a junior at Clovis West. The title for my science fair project is "A Fluoridation Revelation: How Does Water Treated with Sodium Fluoride Affect the Development of the Invertebrates Artemia, Daphnia, Paramecium, and Planaria?"

What other awards or recognitions did you receive at the Awards Ceremony?

I received a first place Senior Division Environmental Science category award, which means that I'll be competing in the California State Science Fair in May. I was also recognized by the Fresno-Madera District Dental Society, the Central Valley Water Awareness Committee, and the Fresno State Science Department.

When and how did you first become interested in science?

I grew up in a family that encouraged exploration, whether it was hiking in the Sierra, gardening in our backyard, or visiting faraway places. My enthusiasm for the subject of science was ignited by my sixth grade teacher, Gary Cohagen. He encouraged me to get involved in science fair and directly influenced my pursuit of a science-based career.

Why did you decide to do your science fair project in the environmental area?

My favorite area within the sciences is biology. A natural extension of studying biology is to study the interaction of life forms within their environment.

Do you plan to do any further projects regarding the effects of fluorides, or regarding other environmental issues?



I'm planning to test the affects of fluoridation on a larger variety of freshwater organisms with an increased spectrum of fluoride concentrations. I want to research sodium fluoride compounds more extensively and perhaps, during future experimentation, determine the affects of NaF on organisms within diverse environmental situations (temperature fluctuations, both man-made and natural pollution, predator-prey relationships, etc.)

What are your educational and career goals?

I'm applying to UC Davis, where I hope to attend Veterinary School. Eventually, I'd like to be a veterinarian for a zoo or wildlife sanctuary. I want to be involved in endangered species conservation and become a part of captive breeding and reintroduction programs.

What environmental issues, locally or globally, are you most concerned about?

I'm especially concerned about the effects of pollution on producer and primary consumer organisms. If a significant threat is posed on their survival by the presence of pollution in their natural environment, serious damage will result in the ecosystem. These organisms provide the basis for the food chain in all soils, oceans, and fresh waters upon which man is ultimately dependent.

Do you have any suggestions about how to get more young people active in protecting our environment?

See *Fair*, page 5

Jesse Morrow, from page 1

there are many exceptions to these “rules”! The proposal states “In case of emergency or quarry development, or road construction or early small bench construction we may blast more often.” The company will determine what constitutes emergency conditions and other exceptions to the “before 4:00 P.M. and two to three times a week” rule. Only after *two years* of blasting, pretty much as often as the company management desires, will the company evaluate reducing the blasting frequency to “once or twice every two weeks, partially to reduce ‘potential impacts’ on surrounding properties.” So then, if human beings and wildlife can last through two long years of blasting at unpredictable but frequent intervals, there may be relief.

R.M.C. says they will operate 315 days a year. The hours for mining will be from 6:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M., Monday through Saturday. Concrete batch plant operation will be from 3:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M., Monday through Saturday. Now comes the big “however”. “Additional nighttime operations are possible for responding to public construction projects or emergency situations.” “Maintenance activities are expected to occur any day including Sunday.” The company is clearly asking for a permit to operate 24/7, *as they see fit*.

Since there will be so much potential nighttime operation, lighting at the site must be bright and over a wide area. The result will be widespread glare and constant light pollution upon an otherwise dark landscape. The elevated position of the mine will make it an eyesore visible for miles.

The mine operators estimate that they will use 150,000 gallons of water a day. This water will come from wells drilled on the property. There is no guess by the company as to the effect on existing wells that are down slope from the mine. There is also, at present, no plan mentioned in

their proposal to deal with any impact on existing wells on neighboring properties.

All aggregate products, asphalt and concrete will move from the constantly diminishing mountain down Kings Canyon Highway. All of the supplies for the mine will be hauled up to the mountain on Kings Canyon Highway. The highway is a two lane road that already carries significant commuter traffic; National Park tourist traffic, including large numbers of tour buses; school buses; and heavy gravel and concrete truck traffic from the Vulcan gravel facility located just east of Centerville. Vulcan has applied for a permit to expand its operation. Who will pay for the additional wear on the highway? What will be the impact of this increased heavy truck traffic?

This project, if approved, will be built in what may be the worst possible place in the Sierra foothills. It is in a major scenic tourist area of California. It is the route to the Giant Sequoias, which attract visitors from around the world. The mine operations could scarcely be more visible. But to a mine developer, this location is desirable because it is on a publicly developed, maintained and financed road, thus increasing the mine’s profits.

Until the officials of Fresno County decide that some economic decisions must take a back seat to spoiling entire natural areas in the name of “progress”, projects such as this one will likely become more numerous, having profoundly detrimental ecological effects throughout the county. ❧

For more information, you may contact

Kay Barnes
165 N. Trout Lake Dr.,
Sanger, CA 93657
(559) 787-2985

Fair, from page 4

Some high schools have Environmental Clubs. This can be a good way to get students involved in special projects. At the elementary level, students need to be exposed to the beauty of nature and why it must be protected. This can be done through field trips (San Joaquin River, Monterey Bay, etc.) Simply put, students will not protect what they don’t appreciate.

Is it true you were the grand prize winner at age 13 in the Poetry Slam contest for Got Milk, and can I quote your (haiku) Resuscitate poem?

Yes, wow, that was four years ago! Sure, you can quote it.

Resuscitate

My sister’s cookies:

Like styrofoam in the mouth.

No milk. 911. ❧

ECOVIEW

by Marian Orvis

Can we just have a laugh now and then? How about a groan?

Our Legal System: In Utah, birds have the right of way on any highway. In North Carolina, it's illegal for dogs and cats to fight. And the winner: in Colorado, pet cats can't wander loose without a tail light!

Our Animal Friends: The Kea, a two-foot-long bird which lives in New Zealand, likes to eat the strips of rubber around car windows. (Some of you have experienced this first hand, I imagine.)

Porcupines float in water.

Crocodiles grow new teeth to replace old ones.

The longest recorded flight of a chicken is 13 seconds!

Camels have three eyelids to protect themselves from sand.

Choosy: A black bear was found passed out at a resort in Baker Lake, Washington, surrounded by dozens of empty cans of beer. The bear got into campers' coolers and "drank the Rainier and wouldn't drink the Busch beer," one witness said. A F&W agent confirmed that the bear did try one can of Busch, ignored the rest, and consumed 36 cans of Rainier.

Food for Thought: During an average lifetime, a person will eat about 60k pounds of food—including 35k cookies.

British theaters say their seats are too narrow for the average American butt.

In the Ukraine, the new popular snack is solid pork fat covered in chocolate.

Oh my!

Econews V34 #8/9 can be thanked for these salient sillies.

CHOOSE TO REUSE

If you have some gently used children's books (infant-18 years) you're looking to unload, send them to BookEnds. This non-profit gives used kids' books new life by donating them to youth centers, literacy programs, and schools in need in California. If the schools in our local area aren't in need, you can send the books via book rate mail to BookEnds, 6520 Platt Ave. #331, West Hills, CA 91307. Go to www.bookends.org.

OR...Another Good Idea...

Grow your own organic herbal remedy garden. Enhance your nutrition and have a ready supply of first aid treatments for minor ailments at hand. Preserve the EARTH by gardening organically. Why? Why not? I strongly recommend that you take a well-deserved day off to visit Rosemary, T.D. and Precious at The Squaw Valley Herb Gardens. Call for reservations, no dropping in. (559) 332-2909. Go to www.squaw.valleyherbgardens.com. I'd even venture to say there are some of you folks reading this that live in Squaw Valley that have not seen this treat. 🌿



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Hite Cove Hike



Photo by Paul Weiss

Trip Schedule

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 Chair is Carolyn Ordway (559) 449-7780 jbord606@yahoo.com. Please contact her 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.

May 14th - Saturday

Day Hike (2A)

A rarely done trail to Horseshoe Bend near Auberry. A big river pool for lunch.

Don Redmond (559) 268-1537

May 21st - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing—Intermediate Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting.

Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

June 4th - Saturday

Day Hike (1B)

Now that it's a little cooler, it's a great time to visit Redwood Canyon. Maybe see a bear.

Don Redmond (559) 268-1537

June 4th - Saturday

Day Hike (3B)

This hike will take you past Mist Falls into tranquil Paradise Valley. Paradise Valley is nestled along the South fork of the Kings River.

John Cameron (559) 896-6919

June 11th - Saturday

Day Hike (1A)

Panoramic Point in Grant Grove, Kings Canyon. Walk along the Park Ridge Fire Lookout trail. Maybe some cross country hiking.

Steve Fretz (559) 439-6673

June 18th - Saturday

Day Hike Moderate (3B)

Walt's superb annual Wawona Loop. Wawona Hotel to Mariposa Grove by shuttle bus. Lunch at the outlook. Optional dinner on the lawn at Wawona Hotel.

Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

June 19th - Sunday

Fathers Day Family Hike (1A)

Little Baldy and Grant Grove. Steve and Jennifer are packing their baby on the easy 700', 1.7 mile hike to the top of Little Baldy. This hike will be appropriate for children, with rest stops and time to enjoy the wildflowers. Afternoon visit to Grant Grove.

Steve Cosner (559) 281-5983

June 25th - Saturday

Day Hike (2C)

Chilnualna Falls. Optional dinner at the Wawona Hotel.

Syd Bluestone (559) 439-8233

June 25th - Saturday

Day Hike Moderate/Strenuous (3D)

This is Walt's Panoramic Hike. We leave from the Yosemite Valley floor and climb up the four mile trail to Glacier Point. From there, we follow the Panoramic Trail over the Illilouette, across the Panoramic Cliffs to Nevada Falls, then down the Mist Trail past Vernal Falls. Approximately 13 miles and 4000' elevation gain.

Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

June 25th - Saturday

Day Hike (2C)

Chilnualna Falls. Your nose will continually be assaulted with the intoxicating smell of bear clover, which, together with manzanita and

oaks makes up the majority of the vegetation along the route. Plus lots of waterfalls. Optional dinner at the Wawona Hotel.

Syd Bluestone (559) 439-8233

July 2nd - Saturday

Day Hike (1A)

Lewis Creek, a quiet getaway for those noisy weekends.

Don Redmond (559) 268-1537

July 4th - Monday

Day Hike (3C)

Hike 14 miles from Tenaya Lake (Sunrise trailhead) to breathtaking Clouds Rest at 9,926 feet.

Optional: bring your sleeping bag and sleep under the stars at Wild Doves Rest in Mariposa (my home) on Sunday night. We'll have a gourmet pizza dinner and a shorter trip Monday morning.

Paul Weiss (209) 966-6605

yosemiteman@starband.net

July 9th - Saturday

Day Hike—Fishing Optional (1B)

Nellie Lake is in the Kaiser Wilderness above Huntington Lake. This hike will be accompanied by a friendly german shepherd.

John Cameron (559) 896-6919

July 10th - Sunday

Mountain Bike

Nelder Grove

Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

July 15th-17th (Friday-Sunday)

Carcamp/Day Hikes (4C)

Waterwheel Falls. If you do the entire route, you'll see enough waterfalls to get you through a 10 year drought. Maybe a little hike on Friday and hike Waterwheel Falls on Saturday. Return home on Sunday.

Must be moderate to strong hiker. Group size limited. Five dollar deposit required. Please sign up early for this one.

Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

See www.tehipite.sierraclub.org for additional trips, updates, and information about our outings program.



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Current and back issues of the *Tehipite Topics* are available on the Web at www.tehipite.sierraclub.org.

Summer *Tehipite Topics* deadline May 20th

San Joaquin River Cleanup Event

This year's National River Cleanup Event will be conducted along the San Joaquin River in the area of Sierra and Floyd Avenues, and at Skaggs Bridge County Park, where there is still a considerable amount of trash and tires in the river and along the banks. The East Fresno Rotary Club and Fresno County will provide dumpsters for trash we haul out of the river. The cleanup starts at 8:30 on May 14th and 15th. We will continue the cleanup all week. Wear long sleeves, long pants, protective shoes, sunscreen and a hat. Leather gloves and trash bags will be provided. Please call for dates, times, and additional sites.

Richard Sloan, RiverTree Volunteers (559) 696-2971.



Photo by Tom Janeczek

McKenzie Table Mountain hikers on Saturday, March 26th. Don Gaede led a fairly large group, anxious to get out on that beautiful sunny day, after being cooped up for so long due to the rain. Everyone had a great day.