

Tehipite Topics

Summer 2011 & Vol. 57, No. 6

www.tehipite.sierraclub.org

Thank You!

Tehipite members contributed over \$5000 during the March Fund Drive to sustain our chapter's environmental work.

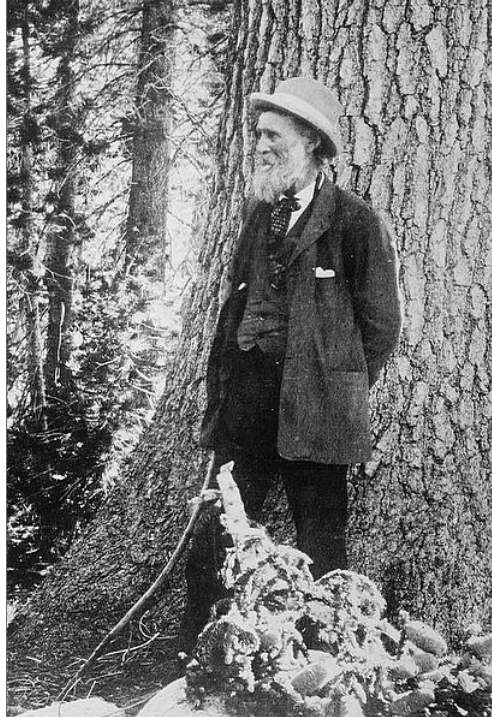
Muir and Me

by Heather Anderson

I like to think of John Muir as my role model, my mentor, but I am not like him in many ways, a tireless organizer, eloquent speaker, thorough, convincing, and prolific writer. Nor could I keep up with his gait over Sierra trails, up Sierra peaks, or swinging treetops in a storm. Nor would I care to jump crevasses or straddle slender snow bridges over those crevasses, as he related in *Stickeen*. His curiosity about the natural world was insatiable, as shown by his discovery of glacial theory gained through acute observational skills and miles of walking through glacial topography. To think that he wrote *Travels in Alaska* forty years after his trip there and was still able to name and describe the smallest plant life so vividly as to provide me a with mental picture of all that he saw! His energy was unsurpassed.

Early in life he walked a thousand miles from Indiana to the Gulf of Mexico. A severe attack of malaria forced him to give up his plan to continue by tracing the Amazon River to its source. Instead, he booked passage to San Francisco, walked across the Central Valley, and spent the next eight years living alone and trekking cross-country over trail-less miles of the rugged Sierra. He once said that all he needed to do to get ready for an

See Muir and Me, page 4



Sierra Club founder John Muir

This photo from Wikimedia is in the public domain.

As an introduction to our General Meeting program this month, an airing of the PBS film *John Muir in the New World* (see the description on page 2), I am printing a short passage from Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra*, in which Muir narrates his trip with a herd of sheep into the Sierra of the Yosemite region. In this passage, dated June 28th, 1869, Muir describes the water ouzel. Muir's close and poetic descriptions of nature are essential yet entertaining reading.

From *My First Summer in the Sierra*: I have been making the acquaintance of a very interesting little bird that flits about the falls and rapids of the main branches of the river. It is not a water-bird in structure, though it gets its living in the water, and never leaves the streams. It is not web-footed, yet it dives fearlessly into deep swirling rapids, evidently to feed at the bottom, using its wings to swim with under water just as ducks and loons do. Sometimes it wades about in shallow places, thrusting its head under from time to time in a jerking, nodding, frisky way that is sure to attract attention.

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Trip Report – Carrizo Plain National Monument

by Karen Hammer

On the first weekend in April a small group of chapter members headed south in search of abundant wildflowers at the Carrizo Plain National Monument. I had been curious about this area for some time, especially after hearing it referred to as "California's Serengeti." This area lies roughly between Bakersfield and Santa Maria, though it's not indicated on my AAA map, and is about a 3.5 hour drive from Fresno. The time to go is wildflower season, but timing a trip to coincide with peak blooms is tricky. The BLM website does a good job of updating their wildflower report, but we had to plan our trip well in advance in order to reserve spots



Painted Rock in the Carrizo Plain
USGS Photo

on the docent-led Painted Rock tour. Due to the cold wet spring we were perhaps a couple of weeks early for peak bloom.

In addition to being home to an extremely high concentration of threatened and endangered vertebrate species (San Joaquin kit fox, the giant kangaroo rat) this is an area sacred to Native Americans. Nevertheless, in spite of efforts to protect Painted Rock, these pictographs have been seriously degraded. My greatest excitement during the tour was sighting the stunning ghostly white

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Chapter Meetings

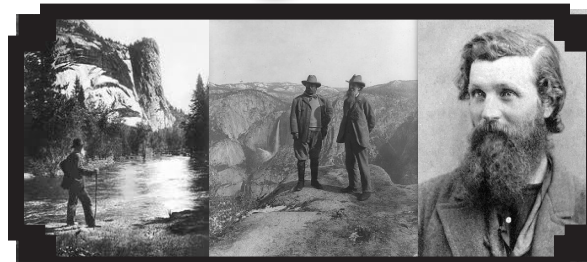
General Meeting

June 15th at 7 p.m.
550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno

Movie Night: *John Muir In The New World*

The life and the career of John Muir come to life through this inspiring and beautiful documentary set against the magnificent landscapes of the American West. The Scottish-born naturalist was one of the first nature preservationists in American history, inspiring others through his writing and his advocacy to keep the wilderness wild. During his lifetime, the impact of his powerful voice could be seen in the preservation of the Yosemite and the sequoia groves of California, and the glacial landscapes of Alaska. His vision survived long after his death through the work of the Sierra Club, an organization he founded.

Shot in high definition in the spectacular landscapes that shaped Muir and were, in turn, shaped by his devotion. A diversity of images run through the program: the Wisconsin woods of his childhood, his incredible journey on foot through the American South, the Yosemite Valley, the California fruit ranch where he lived with his wife and daughters, the Alaskan wilderness that so attracted him, and the National Parks that he was so instrumental in creating." 85 minutes



Photos from Wikimedia

Conservation & Executive Committee Meetings June 1st

The Conservation Committee meets at 7 PM

The Executive Committee meets at 8 PM
University of California Center
550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno



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Merced Conservation and Executive Committee Meetings

(the first Thursday of each month)

Not the usual date and time- TBA, phone 723-4747 for day and time. Still at Rod Webster's home, 345 E. 20th 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.

Merced Group General Meetings

(Third Thursday of each month, except Dec. and May)

Our general meetings start at 7:00, usually over by 8:30 or so. New location- the Activity Room at the Hampshire, 3460 R St. (just before Yosemite Ave. when headed north). Through the front door, straight ahead through the lobby, to the room back left. There will be signs to assist. There will be another event going on in the lobby so just pass on through.

June 16th General Meeting

In June we'll resume our normal schedule with a General Meeting on the third Thursday of the month. Our speaker will be Sarah Matsumoto, senior field organizer from the Sierra Club office in San Francisco. She will speak on "Building Resilient Habitats." Sarah will focus on the Sierra Nevada and California Coast, two of the most vulnerable ecosystems in North America. Climate change will increase the great strain already on the wildlife in these habitats. The increased storms, heat, fires, and rising sea levels that are projected will have great impacts. What can be done to help protect the wildlife, wilderness, and human communities that coexist in these unique ecosystems? Come hear some interesting suggestions for approaching such a daunting prognosis.

Hiatus: There will be no general meetings in the months of July and August. We will resume in September.

Summer planning meeting:

During our summer break there will be a meeting to brainstorm ideas for next year's programs. All are welcome- an exciting time of sharing and planning. Our collective awareness, contacts, and resources amaze me every year.

Join us on Saturday, July 16th, at 11:00 to help plan next year's programs. No previous experience required! The meeting is open to everyone.

We'll meet at Charlie and Sally Magneson's home to brainstorm ideas for the 2011-12 year. We need topics and ideas for our seven regular monthly meetings, plus a featured presenter for our annual December banquet. Our May picnic is also on the to-do list.

We try to pencil in the coming year with timely issues of local, state, and national relevance. There is an effort to maintain a balance between the informational and the entertaining. If this sounds of interest to you please join us. For more information contact Rod at 723-4747.

Charlie and Sally live at 10235 El Capitan in Ballico-Cressey. Coming from the south on Santa Fe, cross the bridge over the Merced River and turn right on El Capitan just over the bridge. Their home is the first one on the right.

From the north, if you are approaching on Santa Fe turn left on El Capitan just before the bridge. If coming from Hwy 99 you may already be on El Capitan and you will just stay on that past Santa Fe and look for their house on the right.



Photo of Yosemite Falls by Chip Ashley taken on the 4-Mile Trail on a hike led by Karen Hammer in June 2010.



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.

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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

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Muir, from page 1

It is about the size of a robin, has short crisp wings serviceable for flying either in water or air, and a tail of moderate size slanted upward, giving it, with its nodding, bobbing manners, a wrenish look. Its color is plain bluish ash, with a tinge of brown on the head and shoulders. It flies from fall to fall, rapid to rapid, with a solid whirl of wingbeats like those of a quail, follows the windings of the stream, and usually alights on some rock jutting up out of the current, or on some stranded snag, or rarely on the dry limb of an overhanging tree, perching like regular tree birds when it suits its convenience. It has the oddest, daintiest mincing manners imaginable; and the little fellow can sing too, a sweet, thrushy, fluty song, rather low, not the least boisterous, and much less keen and accentuated than from its vigorous briskness one would be led to look for. What a romantic life this little bird leads on the most beautiful portions of the streams, in a genial climate with shade and cool water and spray to temper the summer heat. No wonder it is a fine singer, considering the stream songs it hears day and night. Every breath the little poet draws is part of a song, for all the air about the rapids and falls is beaten into music, and its first lessons must begin before it is born by the thrilling and quivering of the eggs in unison with the tones of the falls. I have not yet found its nest, but it must be near the streams, for it never leaves them.

Carrizo, from page 1

owl that flew above and perched on the rock walls, seemingly observing us.

During a visit to this area you may also see the herd of about 50 pronghorns that have been reintroduced to this area. This exotic looking animal is the fastest is the Western Hemisphere and is the only animal in the world with branched horns (not antlers) and who sheds these horns as if they were antlers. Walking along the San Andreas fault-line or visiting remains of mining operations are other activities to pursue while at the monument, not to mention viewing the night sky with astonishing clarity far from any major population center.

If you plan a trip you need to know that camping is pretty bare bones and you need to carry in water. Space is limited in the two official campgrounds and we were pretty closely jammed in with a lot of other people, but the next morning we agreed that sharing that night sky with others had been part of the experience.

Muir and Me, from page 1

expedition was to "throw some tea and bread in an old sack and jump over the back fence." His years of labor in Scotland and on a pioneer Wisconsin farm so prepared him for physical hardship that he seemed indifferent to fear, cold, loneliness, danger, or even death.

It is perhaps because of these early experiences in the Sierra that he became such a dedicated and energetic voice for the environment. His speaking ability was attested to by his friend John Burroughs, nature writer, who noted that if you "ask Muir to tell you his famous dog story (from Stickeen), you get the whole theory of glaciation thrown in" as well. Burroughs later wrote in his journal that "conversation with Muir was not an exchange of ideas, but a sparring match. He likes to get in the first cut and follow it up." It is said among nature writers that John Muir was the wildest, most active, daring, capable, self-reliant, and most at home in the wilderness. He talked fluently and easily, but he wrote laboriously, and complained that it took him a month to write a chapter that could be read in an hour. He had written only two books by the time he was seventy. But, driven by a kind of missionary zeal to bring the light of conservation ethics to the world, his further output included fourteen more books to help change public opinion.

For seventeen years Muir led the fight to declare Yosemite a national park. He worked to save the Grand Canyon, the petrified forests, and the redwood forests from destruction. His last long battle to save Hetch Hetchy (north and adjacent to Yosemite), a beautiful valley equal in grandeur to that of Yosemite Valley, lost, and politicians got their way to dam and flood the valley for San Francisco water. One of the founders of the Sierra Club, Muir served for eighteen years as its first president until his passing.

In comparison with Muir, I have the same passionate love of his beautiful Range of Light. Like Muir, I feel the Sierra to be my spiritual home where I find life, as he remarked, serene and separate from the "galling harness of civilization." Like Muir, I have a constant yearning to return to wilderness, and that "going to the woods [mountains] is going home." He recognized how being in touch with wildlife and wild places refreshed and invigorated folks. "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings," he exclaimed.

I hope to say, as he did at the end of his life (Christmas Eve, 1914, with manuscripts in progress scattered over his bed), "I have lived a bully life. I have done what I set out to do."

Pole Cats Can Turn You Into A Quadruped

by David Georgi, Lucia Chapter

This article is reprinted from the from the Santa Lucian with the author's permission. Tehipite member Don Gaede alerted me to this article, which we both think is a great one for hikers. I got trekking poles about a year ago; they are a great aid to my walking. David wanted me to be sure to cite Jayah Paley as his pole guru. Find more at www.adventurebuddies.net

"Pole Cats" is a Santa Lucia Sierra Club group dedicated to demonstrating the benefits of trekking poles on easy day hikes. Trekking poles are similar to ski poles, only are specially adapted for hiking. In recent years, trekking poles have gone high tech. Shafts are made of strong, lightweight alloys or carbon fiber. Carbide tips securely grip the most slippery surfaces. Handles are made of strong, cushioned materials and ergonomically offset. Adjustable straps are designed to carry the body weight and eliminate harmful impact on hands and wrists. Shock absorbers reduce impact on hands, wrists and arms. Length adjusters allow quick and secure pole length adjustments to meet differing terrain requirements.



Four legs are better than two for hiking. Humans are not born knowing how to walk on two legs and take many months to develop the necessary muscles and coordination. Learning to walk on four legs also takes time and determination. The following anecdote explains why the Pole Cats group is needed.

Last year while visiting Kauai, my friend Greg and I decided to hike the Alakai Swamp. I knew it was in the ancient volcanic crater at an elevation of about 4000 feet. The map showed that the only trail then open started at the rim and descended into the crater. In planning the hike, I said to Greg, "I don't know about the trail conditions. I'm going to use my trekking poles. Would you like to use my extra set?"

Greg and I have been friends for many years, yet he is wary of some of my interests.

He eyed me suspiciously with knowledge of some of my more whimsical activities, "Don't you feel a bit foolish with those? You look like an Edmond Hillary wannabe."

I saw that Greg was resistant to the idea that poles could help his hiking and responded, "I just know that poles give me more stability and endurance and I don't know what sort of conditions to expect on this trail."

Greg relented, "OK, bring them along and I may use them."

At the trailhead, I offered to demonstrate some ways to use the poles.

He replied, "Look, I'm going to carry them and I may even use them, but you have to promise not to pester me about technique. They're just poles and what sort of training could you need?"

As we walked down a gentle stretch of trail, Greg's attitude wasn't helped when we approached a group of locals heading up the trail.

One shouted out in a good natured ribbing, "Where you gonna find snow, brada?"

Another followed up with "Hey, did you lose your skis or something?"

They all laughed and continued up the trail.

I could feel Greg cringe.

We continued until the trail became steep and muddy. I said, "Poles are really helpful on slippery downhill trails like this. It's best to extend the poles to their maximum length and keep them planted in front of you."

He replied, "I'll just use them at their regular length. I don't want to keep readjusting them."

I extended mine and took a series of short steps with the poles firmly giving me support and confidence. Greg awkwardly attempted planting his poles and was able to save several slips.

The trails of Alakai Swamp meander through dense jungle and marshy swampland, connected by many steep and uneven stairs. We came to the first of many downhill steps built of wood, some steps as high as 18 inches. It was a breeze to plant both poles on the next step down and then gracefully hop down, with the biceps serving as shock absorbers. After a while, I looked back and saw Greg following my technique.

Great

San Joaquin River Clean-up

Please contact Richard Sloan at 559-696-2971, riverrich1509@aol.com, Steve Starcher, 559-289-8874, sastarcher@gmail.com or Steve Haze, 559-970-6320 re opportunities to help clean up the San Joaquin River.

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

Reserve early for 2011 !!

July 16-19; July 30-August 2; September 9-11; October 17-19

Explore the wild, windswept islands of Channel Island National Park. Enjoy the frolicking seals and sea lions. Train your binoculars on unusual sea and land birds. Hike the trails to find blankets of wildflowers and plants found in no other place on earth. Kayak or snorkel the pristine waters--- or just relax at sea. These live-aboard, eco tours depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68' twin diesel Truth. Fee (\$785 for July trips; \$590 for September and October) includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks, beverages, plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to lead hikes, call attention to items of interest and present evening programs.

To make a reservation mail a \$100 check, payable to Sierra Club to leader: Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732.

Contact leader for more information (626-443-0706; jholtzhl@aol.com)



When we encountered our first uphill stairs, I confidently planted both poles at the base of the next step and used my triceps to push my body to the next level. It felt great to be using both upper and lower muscle groups to ascend the series of steps that would have quickly exhausted unassisted leg muscles. I noticed that Greg was using the same technique.

We came to a stream with algae covered stepping stones. I planted both poles alongside the first stone and felt the carbide tips securely grab the slippery bottom. I supported a large part of my body weight and stepped to the next stone, repositioning my poles and repeating the process across the stream. Greg followed and when he made it across, he said, "OK, I'm starting to see how these things can be useful. They really helped going up and down the stairs and this stream would have been scary without them."

We finally reached our objective, an overlook above the Na Pali coast. Clouds at first obscured the view, but soon began opening and offering brief glimpses of the jewel-like ocean and verdant valleys below. We took in the beauty around us while enjoying some trail mix and a long drink of water.

On the way back, we ascended and descended the flights of stairs in reverse order. Seeing that Greg's attitude toward poles was improving, I sought opportunities to elicit positive perceptions from his personal experience as a strong skier. On one strenuous uphill stretch, I asked if he could apply any techniques from using ski poles. He sarcastically responded between exhausted breaths, "I don't often ski uphill." I decided not to pursue the issue.

By the time we neared the trailhead, Greg said, "You know, I don't think I could have made it without these poles." He didn't ask for any pointers, however. Weeks later, he told me he purchased a set of his own. And, yes, Greg and I are still friends.

Greg's response to trekking poles is common. Most people assume you can use them intuitively. I have found that to use poles optimally, training is needed to develop appropriate muscle memory. Then you can realize such benefits as:

- Using all muscle groups for more endurance, strength, stability and efficiency
- Getting a full body workout and cardiac conditioning

- Reducing injuries and impact on hips and knees

- Increasing fat burning

October 2008 Prevention magazine has an interesting article about how hiking reduces belly (visceral) fat. If you exercise enough to lose 10% of your body fat, you lose 30% visceral fat. It says increasing the MET (metabolic equivalent hours) and using on-again off-again bursts of energy gives the most time-efficient calorie burning workout possible. Add poles and you have a near perfect way to keep fit.

The recent technical advancements make poles high tech hardware. To optimize these advances, the appropriate software is needed. Mobility consultant Jayah Faye Paley has developed a training program that includes a number of skill sets to develop muscle memory that allows optimal pole usage.

When I first bought some poles, I assumed anyone could use them instinctively. One day, I forgot them at the trailhead after a hike and decided to replace them. Looking through a recreational equipment catalog, I noticed Paley's training DVD for poles. On a whim I ordered it and upon watching it immediately saw that I was doing everything wrong, including potentially harmful practices. I began practicing using individual skill sets on my hikes and found that my muscles could develop proper memory after applying the training principles for several miles of hiking. It took me about six months to get the entire set of skills down pat. I attended some seminars given by Paley, who verified that I was coming along learning her technique.

I started Pole Cats to share this revolutionary technique. All Pole Cats hikes are easy and include uphill and downhill sections and brushed over areas. I demonstrate basic techniques of using poles for uphill by planting the poles a little ahead of my feet, and as I walk past them, fully extend my triceps to give forward momentum. My legs love the assistance. By concentrating, I can incorporate other muscle groups. As the trail becomes steeper, I take shorter steps and increase how often I plant the poles (from alternating steps to every step). For the steepest and longest trail segments, I combine use of poles with the rest step, where I lock my knee for an instant each step giving my leg muscles an instant to rest (much like the heart between beats). This lets me continue,

however slowly, for hours, adjusting my pace to my heartbeat.

For downhill sections, I adjust the poles to their maximum length and use them to reduce impact on hips and knees. Pole manufacturer Leki estimates that this technique can reduce 250 tons of impact on an eight hour hike. Optimal pole usage exercises biceps, triceps and other muscle groups. Think about it: if Tyrannosaurus rex had used poles, he would not have evolved those puny little arms. (Or better, don't think about it.)

Paley observed, "You cannot change the terrain, but you can change your response to it. Hence the (need for) frequent adjustments of length and body awareness of core muscles."

When encountering brushy trails, I use the cruising mode, in which I point my thumb and index fingers straight down and lift the poles off the ground with my ring finger and pinky. Holding the tips of the poles together behind me lets me walk through brushed over trails easily.

The benefits of using trekking poles extend to those with mobility issues. Poles give strength, confidence and stability to those who may be frail or uncoordinated. When former Sierra Club president Ed Wayburn was in his nineties, his physical condition forced him to give up hiking. Paley showed him how to use poles and he was able to continue outings for several years. They allow family members with less hiking stamina to be able to keep up with the stronger ones. Anyone afflicted with one or more of the insidious O's: Old, Overweight, Out of Shape, and Optimistic can benefit from poles. I represent each and find the most insidious one is Optimistic, in which I convince myself to attempt tasks that are above my ability level.

For me, the best part of hiking with poles is using all my muscle groups to glide through the landscape as a quadruped. And, as far as hiking is concerned, quadrupeds definitely have more fun. Join me on a Pole Cats hike and become an honorary Pole Cat. Bipedes are always welcome.



Outings 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 Marcia Rasmussen, Marcia@BigBaldy.com, 559-332-2419. Please contact Marcia 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.

Outings Leaders may post their own trips on the web page or send them to Marcia@BigBaldy.com.

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.

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Sierra Club California Needs Your Help

You have great people in Sacramento lobbying to protect the Sierra and on other critical issues like climate change. Bill Magavern, Jim Metropoulos, and Annie Pham do a terrific job, and they need our help. Please go to the Sierra Club California web site at

www.sierraclubcalifornia.org

Donate generously!

Required Liability Waiver

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the Liability Waiver before you choose to participate on an outing, please go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

Redwood Canyon Day Hike

Saturday, June 4, 2011 - 5:30pm

Intermediate day hike, distance 9.3 miles. Descend 2400 ft.; climb 2400 ft. Max elevation 6900 ft. This is a hike of the loop trail through Redwood Canyon in Kings Canyon National Park. I am hoping to be there at the right time to see the dogwoods in bloom at the creek crossing in the middle of the hike. Leaders: Karen Hammer and Jim Wall. Contact: Jim Wall, 559-661-0604

Ascent to Glacier Point and post hike barbecue

Saturday, June 11, 2011 - 7:30am - 8:30pm

Day Hike, Rating: Intermediate

Ascend to Glacier Point via the 4 mile trail with views of Yosemite Falls across the valley. This is moderately strenuous and is for hikers who are reasonably fit and accustomed to doing hikes of this length and elevation. Bring a minimum of 2 Leader: Karen Hammer 298-5272

Flyfishing Upper Twin Lakes Car Camp

July 8 & 9, 2011 - 7:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Day Hike. Rating: Intermediate. Distance: 7.00 miles.

Ever want to try your hand at casting a fly for trout? Want to have a better than even chance of catching something on your first trip? Like hiking the high Sierra? Here's an opportunity. Car camp Friday evening. On Saturday Morning, we will break camp and head for Upper Twin Lake. This is a moderate hike, all on trail (no cross country). Fishing here is good for brook and rainbow trout, all wild (not hatchery raised). We will practice catch and release with barbless hooks. If people arrive at the campground in time, the leader will go over basic knots, how best to handle trout to be released, and answer any angling questions the group may have. The leader will be going up Friday Morning in order to secure a campsite, so the participants will have to organize their own caravan/car pool, or simply drive up on their own. Email flyflinger78@yahoo.com for a printable topographic map of the hiking area. If you're willing to share your email to facilitate carpooling, say so. Fishing License required. Call John Cameron at 559 903 513838.. No experience is necessary.

Mount Whitney Summit

Saturday, July 30, 2011

Trip is currently filled with a waiting list.

Difficult day hike; climbing and descending elevation 6,000 ft. Max elevation 14,505 ft. Interested in climbing the highest peak in the 48 contiguous US states? We are excited to offer this fabulous trip. It is one of THE premier hikes in the country, not only because of Mt. Whitney's "highest 14er" status, but because of the hike's extreme, rugged beauty. This is simply a must do hike. We will ask \$15 from each participant, to hold a space on the trip. This covers your share of the US Forest Service permit fee; it is non-refundable. We plan to carpool (a six hour drive) to Lone Pine the day before the hike and then car camp at the trailhead. Some people may be able to stay at a motel or hostel in Lone Pine, if they wish. We will assemble at the trailhead at 4:00 AM to begin our hike. Don't forget to bring a headlamp! Expect a very long day on the trail. If we're lucky, we may be down in time to eat dinner in town. Everyone will be tired, so we encourage participants to car camp at the trailhead or get a room in town. We will carpool back to Fresno area the following day.

Gerald Vinnard is primary leader, assistant leaders Marcia Rasmussen and John Rasmussen. Aside from the \$15 permit fee, participants will need to share campground fees or pay their own motel/hostel expenses. Bring your own food. Riders are asked to share carpool expenses.

Gerald Vinnard, 559-431-5780 or gvinnard@hotmail.com or Marcia Rasmussen, 559-332-2419 or Marcia@BigBaldy.com



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Your articles and photos are welcome! Dead-
 line for *Tehipite Topics* is the 15th of each
 month. Please submit material to
 watsvalleypreservation@gmail.com.



This photo at the Hart Tree shows a group led to Redwood Canyon in Sequoia National Park on June 4 by Outings Leader Jim Wall. This was Jim's first hike as a leader. There will be many more. Nice photo!

Grosbeaks in Watts Valley

by Chip Ashley

A few years ago, my wife, Julie, asked me to put up a birdfeeder in our front yard that would be visible from our front window. This feeder has provided many hours of entertainment and has taught us a great deal about our local ecosystem.

This year I noticed two birds I had not previously seen. One is a blackbird-sized,

strikingly colorful, stocky, thick-billed bird with a black head and bright yellow brow. I hurried to my grandmother's old bird book and soon identified our visitor as the evening grosbeak, *Hesperiphona vespertina*. The other is a bird of similar size but somewhat slighter build, the black-headed grosbeak, *Pheucticus melanocephalus*.



Male evening grosbeak, photo by Dave Menke of USFW

These large finches forage in trees and bushes, sometimes on the ground. They mainly eat seeds, berries and insects. Outside of the nesting season they often feed in flocks. As coniferous breeders, they are a little out of their range in Watts Valley in the spring. A result of climate change?



Female evening grosbeak, Wikimedia photo by Peter Wallack



Female black-headed grosbeak, Wikimedia photo by Peter Wallack

The black-headed grosbeak, same family as the cardinal, likes deciduous patches and thick cover in coniferous forests, so it is also a little out of place in Watts Valley, which is blue oak woodland. Could climate change be the reason?

Male black-headed grosbeak (below), Wikimedia photo by Steve Velo

