



The Roadrunner

LET'S CELEBRATE AT BENJI'S—

Kern-Kaweah Chapter to gather at Benji's French Basque Restaurant on March 28 for annual event.

The Kern-Kaweah Chapter's annual spring banquet is a tradition to meet new members and renew friendships with old friends. Highlights of the evening at Benji's French Basque Restaurant, 4001 Rosedale Highway on Saturday, March 28, will include honoring Chapter members with awards, receiving updates from Chapter activists, visiting over a delicious meal, and enjoying a special speaker. An evening not to be missed!

We are very fortunate to have as our guest speaker, Fletcher Linton, Forest Botanist, Sequoia National Forest. Linton states that the southern Sierra Nevada is a floristic melting pot between the Central Valley, Mojave Desert, Central California Mountains, and High Sierra. Come and enjoy a spectacular slideshow of these bioregions and the rare plants that grow there. This is your chance to brush up on the floristic beauties that call our area home!

A no-host bar social hour will be from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Dinner will be served from 6:30-7:30

p.m., followed by awards presentations and our guest speaker.

Benji's French Basque-style dinner includes a complete Basque set-up, including two entrees: baked skinless breast of chicken and roast tri-tip. For vegetarians, we offer a garlic spaghetti entrée. A delectable cake will be served for dessert. The charge is \$24 per person, which includes tax and tip. Please fill out the dinner reservation coupon on the insert, and mail it to: Georgette Theotig, P.O. Box 38, Tehachapi, CA, 93581, so it is received by MARCH 24.

IMPORTANT: We must receive your reservation by March 24. There can be no payments at the door. Our dinner policy states that if you make a reservation and do not attend the dinner, we cannot refund your check. Cancellations must also be received by March 24.

PLEASE NOTE: The Condor Group is leading a Wind Wolves

Hike the morning of March 28. Make a grand day of it! Hike during the day, and then attend the banquet, appetite stimulated by fresh air and the fabulous sights of Wind Wolves Preserve. Call Dale Chitwood for details, 661.242.1076.

Botanist Fletcher Linton's expertise is in plants such as the Shirley Meadows star-tulip.



BANQUET DIRECTIONS:

From north or south on Highway 99, exit west on Rosedale Highway. Benji's is on the left, 3 lights from Hwy 99, and less than 3 blocks. We urge attendees to CARPOOL, as parking is limited, plus it's good for the environment! We look forward to seeing everyone at this spring gathering!

—Georgette Theotig
Chapter Chair

PAUL GIPE TO SPEAK ABOUT RENEWABLE ENERGY AT COLLEGE OF SEQUOIAS

Paul Gipe, world renowned wind energy expert, author and dynamic speaker, will be speaking about "The Coming Energy Revolution in North America" on Friday, Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. at the College of the Sequoias Ponderosa Auditorium (Room 350) in Visalia. Gipe will be discussing how to move America to renewable energy while revitalizing the rust-belt economy.

Gipe has led the campaign to adapt European electricity feed laws to the North American market. The recent Ontario feed law is being hailed as the most progressive renewable energy policy in North America in two decades. (See www.wind-works.org.) The talk is being sponsored by the Mineral King group, Tulare County Audubon Society and the South Valley Peace Center.



ANNUAL MARCH CONSERVATION APPEAL—A LETTER TO MEMBERS

Executive Committee requests participation to support projects

In March each year our chapter has always asked members for money to help our activists protect our air, water, wildlife, and wild places. We also work to decrease the impacts of local sprawl on farmland and global warming.

This year we do not need your money; we only need your time! Our excellent activists cannot alone do all that should potentially be done. They welcome your participation as an activist.

The following are some suggestions of ways to give of your time. These ideas take progressively more of your time as the list gets to the end.

1. Phone new members: only takes about an hour per month; you can phone from the comfort of your own home.
2. Calendars sales: Choose to organize the sale, or help sell calendars.
3. *Roadrunners*: Help label *Roadrunners* over snacks and conversation for two hours every other month in someone's home.
4. Serve on dinner committees: Serve on committees to organize the Fall Dinner and/or the Spring Banquet.
5. Monitor local developer settlements: Monitors needed for observing solar photo-voltaic panels and xeriscape landscaping.
6. Subscribe by e-mail to informative lists: The National Sierra Club Insider, Kern News (a Kern-Kaweah Chapter list of news and activities), others California lists, or otherwise inform yourself of the Chapter response to issues and events. (If you do not wish to obtain authorization and check Sierra Club policy before making your comment, simply comment without mentioning the Club. Given your environmental awareness, you will almost never come up with something significantly different from the Club.) Every campaign any organization runs always tries to generate letters to all local newspapers. Some of us have at least one letter printed



each year. Is there an issue you could write a letter to the editor about?

7. Attend hearings: Come to City Council, Board of Supervisors, Bureau of Land management (BLM), Forest Service, or other agency hearings to support an activist.

8. Participate at events: Help "man" a Chapter booth at local fairs and festivals.

9. Assist an activist: Become familiar enough with an issue an activist is already working on. Get on the agency mailing list to become familiar with proposed projects; speak at the hearing in support of our activists.

10. Use your expertise: Use your special skills such as: biology, geology, law, energy, hydrology, chemistry, or other environmental fields —we need you!

11. Be a Sierra Club outings leader: Become a certified leader to lead hikes, walks along the river, family events, or other outdoors fun!

These are ways the Executive Committee believes you can help make a difference here and now. Please add to our list. We are fortunate to have your membership. Thank you in advance for donating your time. Please contact any Group or Chapter officer to offer your time.

Sincerely,

The Executive Committee of the Kern-Kaweah Chapter

Planners to add to global warming with Rio Bravo subdivision

Global warming is a serious issue, perhaps the most serious issue that we as a species will ever have to face. Dr. James Hansen, Director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, writes, "The stakes, for all life on the planet, surpass those of any previous crisis. The greatest danger is continued ignorance and denial, which could make tragic consequences unavoidable."

A lot of entities are making an honest effort to address global warming, but the City of Bakersfield is burying its head in the sand. The City tolerates a Planning Commissioner who calls global warming a "cyclical hoax," and the City

just approved the massive Rio Bravo Ranch project, calling it "insignificant" for its global warming impact and refusing to require feasible mitigation measures. For that matter, the EIR nonsensically asserts that this project "will assist in the attainment of AB 32 goals," goals mandated by the State to address climate change. This huge project will cut down 43,000 carbon-sequestering citrus trees. We estimate greenhouse gas associated with the project at 121,000 tons/year, much higher than any significance threshold under consideration in the state. The EIR makes egregious statistical errors,

comparing numbers that measure different quantities and ignoring inconvenient evidence, in order to reach its seemingly preordained conclusion of insignificant impact on global warming.

If this massive project, 4688 residential units and 500,000 square feet of commercial units, can go without mitigating its impact on global warming, then consistency dictates that almost no other project in California will have to address climate change. The world is watching California for climate change direction. This outrageous decision cannot go unopposed!

—Gordon Nipp

Public comment period for Tejon Ranch draft EIS to end on May 5

The documents—a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act and a draft Tehachapi Uplands Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)—are available for public review and comment until May 5, 2009.

The draft MSHCP, authored by Tejon Ranch Company with input from the Forest Service, describes measures to be taken by Tejon Ranch to minimize and mitigate effects of its actions on native plants and wildlife, including California condors.

The draft EIS analyzes the environmental impacts of issuing the 50-year incidental take permit to Tejon Ranch Company for on-going ranch activities and a planned community development, Tejon Mountain Village.

An incidental take permit authorizes the incidental take of a listed species, and does not authorize the activities that result in take. Take is defined in the Endangered Species

Act as harass, harm, pursue, wound, kill, hunt, capture, shoot, trap or collect a threatened or endangered species, or attempt to do any of these activities. No condors would be permitted to be killed under a permit issued by the Service.

The draft MSHCP describes measures which would minimize and mitigate effects of its activities on 27 native plants, animals, and their habitats on 141,886 acres of Tejon Ranch, including a 5,533-acre development adjacent to the Interstate 5 corridor and Lebec community in Kern County. The incidental take permit would also cover ongoing historic uses of the property, such as grazing and film production. The permit would not cover take caused by hunting or mineral extraction.

The documents themselves are available on line and can be viewed and downloaded from the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office's web site at: <http://www/fws.gov/ventura>. For further information you can contact Steve Kirkland at 805. 644.1766 (Ex 267).

Basic information for this article taken from release from Fish and Wildlife Service.

—Contributed by Mary Ann Lockart

Volunteers invited to serve at at Yosemite Valley's Le Conte Memorial Lodge

LeConte Memorial Lodge is a 105-year-old visitor center, environmental education center, and library operated by the Sierra Club in Yosemite National Park. We are looking for Sierra Club members who have visited Yosemite at least once within the last five years and are interested in volunteering for one week between May 2 and Sept. 26. Hours of operation are from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., Wednesdays through Sundays and 7:30-10 p.m. for weekend evening programs on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

All volunteers arrive on Saturday by 3 p.m. and volunteer at LML that evening, and depart the following Saturday between 1 and 4 p.m., after volunteering. Training takes place on Sunday morning at 9 a.m. Volunteers enjoy free entrance to Yosemite National Park, free camping at the campsite during the time they volunteer, and Monday and Tuesday to spend at their leisure. To provide the best opportunity for visitors, excellent communication skills are essential.

For more information visit: www.sierraclub.org/education/leconte/volunteering or contact Bonnie Gisel, the LeConte Lodge curator, at leconte.curator@sierraclub.org or 209.403.6676 (before May 2). After May 2 call 209.372.4542.

—Suzanne Sharrock, Volunteer Chair
Le Conte Memorial Lodge Committee

Channel Island National Park beckons as Sierra Club summer destination

Exploring the wild, windswept islands of Channel Island National Park is the goal of several summer trips planned by Sierra Club (May 1-4, July 17-20, Aug. 7-10 and Sept. 11-14). Spring wildflowers, the sight of whales, dolphins, sea and land birds and the endangered island fox, and reminders of the Chumash people who lived there will be memorable experiences for everyone.

Cruises depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68' twin diesel *Truth*. The fee, \$950, includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks, beverages, plus the services of a ranger/naturalist. Contact leader for more information (626.443.0706 or jholtzhln@aol.com)

—Eva Nipp

Jim Clark hike planned for April 4 to dedicate binoculars, recall memories

Friends of Jim Clark are invited to a hike on April 4 at 9:30 a.m. in his memory. The hike starts at the Kern River Preserve in Weldon, 1.1 miles east of the intersection of Hwy 178 and Sierra Way in Weldon. Wear hiking clothing. We will dedicate the binoculars purchased in Jim's memory, and share favorite memories of him. Alison Sheehey will lead us on a short nature trail for birding using the new binoculars. Bring a lunch to enjoy on picnic tables back at the Preserve. The hills should be cloaked in spring green for this special day! Be ready to share a favorite Jim Clark memory! Call G. Theotig, 661.822.4371 for details.

—Georgette Theotig



KERN KAWEAH ROUNDUP

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY IF YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN SIERRA CLUB HIKES:

Everyone is welcome, Sierra Club members and non-members, to join in any of the outdoor activities. Requirements: You must be in condition for the type of hike, equipped appropriately for the activity and prepared to sign a Sierra Club release for liability. You must be willing to follow the leader's directions. Be sure to bring any personal medicines you might need. Customary appropriate equipment includes good hiking shoes, plenty of water, snack, sunglasses, suntan lotion, and layered clothing. The following might be helpful but definitely is not required: compass, whistle, matches or lighter, and a good first aid kit. Long pants are recommended. Unprepared for the prospective hike? It will be a no-go for you. Participation must be leader approved. Please let the leader know ahead of time that you are intending to participate. Check individual group listings for the desired means of communication.

Since unexpected change of plans may be necessary, it is recommended that YOU contact the hike leader the night before to be assured that the hike is still going to happen.

New California legislation designed to protect the consumer requires us to publish this notice: CST 2087755-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California. This legislation is designed to protect the user of outdoor activities that require cash payments of more than \$50 for participation.

BUENA VISTA GROUP



More info? Call Donnel Lester at 661.831.6784 or e-mail donnelc3bvg@earthlink.net or Isabel at 661.246.6195.

Tuesday conditioning hikes of four or five miles are at 7 p.m. at the corner of Highways 178 and 184. Trails hiked vary from week to week. Contact Gordon (gnipp@bak.rr.com) or Larry (661-873-8107) for more information.

Saturday, March 7—Breakfast program with Bob Lerude, Kern County Parks director, discussing “The Future of Kern County Parks.” Meet at Camino Real restaurant, 3500 Truxtun, 10 a.m. Breakfast is served for \$7.50 per person (tax and tip included). RSVP to Ann at 661.589.7796.

Saturday, April 4—Breakfast program with Dr. Ted Murphy of CSUB speaking on “Kit Fox Tales” (30 years with Bakersfield’s favorite endangered species. Meet at Camino Real restaurant, 3500 Truxtun, 10 a.m. Breakfast is served for \$7.50 per person (tax and tip included). RSVP to Ann at 661.589.7796.

Wednesday, April 22—Sierra Club Wine & Cheese Social 5 to 7 p.m. at SURFACE Gallery, 1703-20th St, Bakersfield (across from the Fox Theatre). This is an informal opportunity for new and old members to get acquainted. RSVP to Ann at 661.589.7796.

Notice: Highway cleanup has been suspended by Cal-Trans temporarily due to delayed delivery of newly required safety vests. Cleanup will resume when the vests are received. An announcement will be placed in the *Roadrunner* publication when highway cleanup resumes.

BVG Recycles—Bring your household batteries and unbroken CFL’s to our meetings, and we’ll recycle them for you. **Meeting Notices**—If you would like to receive Buena Vista Group meeting and activity notices by email, please contact Donnel Lester, at donnelc3bvg@earthlink.net, with Add me to the email list. You can opt out of the email notices at any time. We try to limit this to once-a-month emails.

CONDOR GROUP



More info? Mary Ann Lockhart (661.242.0432). Hikes? Dale Chitwood (661.242.1076)

Saturday, March 28 Wind Wolves hike—We will meet at the PMC tennis courts at 8 a.m. to car pool and drive to the gate at the bottom of the trail off Highway 166. Here we will begin a 7 1/2-mile round trip hike to Reflection Lake. We hike upstream along a lovely creek for two miles and then turn east up a hill to the site. This lake is a sag pond, a product of an earthquake fault, which may or may not contain water. The altitude gain up the hill is only 600 ft. There should be wildflowers along the way. Reservations are essential. Call Dale Chitwood (242.1076) or Mary Ann Lockhart (242.0432).

Saturday, April 4—Dana Bleitz of The Southwestern Herpetologists Society is to be featured speaker at the Condor Group meeting in the Pine Mountain Club Community Building. 6 p.m. potluck, 7 p.m. program. This is a great time to plan an afternoon hike (there may be wildflowers!) to followed by a potluck supper and a great program. Call Lockhart, 662.242.0432 Open to all.

Saturday, April 25—Mt. Guillermo. Meet at the PMC tennis courts at 8 a.m. to join the car pool trip to Pine Springs Campground located off of Lockwood Valley Road where the hike begins. This is considered an easy hike of about 4 miles round trip. The elevation gain is only about 600 ft. and is rewarded with a gorgeous view of the Cuyama Badlands to the west. Wildflower displays are expected. Reservations are essential. Call Dale Chitwood 661.242.1076 or Mary Ann Lockhart 661.242.0432.

Saturday, April 25—Nature Fest, noon til 3:30 p.m. Frazier Park Elementary School, Frazier Park
Hands on activities for young and old, displays, story times, and much more. Free to all. More info? call 551.242.0432


KAWEAH GROUP

More info? Call Pam Clark (559.784.4643) or Diane Jetter (559.781.8897).

OWENS PEAK GROUP

More info? Chair Dennis Burge (760.375.7967) or e-mail dennis93555@yahoo.com. Jim Nichols, hikes (760.375.8161) or e-mail jnichols@ridgecrest.ca.us.

Monday, Feb. 23, 7:30 pm.—Stan Haye will bring a DVD of Edward Abbey at the Univ. of Utah, 1988, 50 min. Abbey talks about politics, writing, wilderness, Glen Canyon, Desert Solitaire and more. Maturango Museum.

 **Saturday, March 21**— Flower hike. This is one of the best flower sites we can find; details to be announced, max elev. 4000 - 5000 ft, 1500 - 2000 ft elev. gain, 4 - 8 mi RT). This year should produce a magnificent display of flowers in a variety of hot spots. We are therefore dedicating both our March and April hikes to visiting wildflower outbursts and hiking the associated terrain. We will find the most interesting flowers, hike to that, and maybe bag a peak in the process. The hike will be announced a week before via email or you can call the numbers below. This will be an easy/moderate hike and a great photo opportunity. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Ridgecrest Cinema parking lot. For more information, call Dennis Burge at 760.375.7967 or Jim Nichols at 760.375.8161.

Monday, March 23, 7:30 p.m. —Joan Holtz (Angeles Chap.) will present “Direction and Strategies of Sierra Club's Global Population and the Environment Program.” Our new campaign is called "Join the Population/Justice/Environmental Challenge. One Million Signatures for One Billion Dollars." (still tinkering with the title). Maturango Museum,

Saturday, April 18—Flower hike. See March hike write-up. We will find another good flower display and hike to that, and maybe bag a peak in the process. We want to see how the patterns develop before picking the exact locations. The hike will be announced a week before via email or you can call the numbers below. This will be an easy/moderate hike and a great photo opportunity. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Ridgecrest Cinema parking lot. For more information, call Dennis Burge at 760.375.7967 or Jim Nichols at 760.375.8161.

MINERAL KING GROUP

More info? Call 559.761.0592. Please also visit mineralking.sierraclub.org for more info.

Friday, Feb. 27 —Wind energy expert Paul Gipe will be speaking Ponderosa Hall, College of the Sequoias, 7 p.m. His topic is about the coming North America energy revolution. (See article on page 1 of *The Roadrunner*.)

Saturday, March 7—This will be an easy winter "stroll" out of Hospital Rock in Sequoia National Park. We will walk 4 miles round trip to a waterfall and then have a potluck back at Hospital Rock. Rain cancels. Call Joanne or David at 733.2078 for meeting place and time.

Friday, March 13—Movie Night: “King Korn.” By growing an acre of corn in Iowa two friends uncover the devastating impact that corn is having on the environment, public health and family farms. 210 Café, 210 W Center St, Visalia. Informal dinner at 6 p.m. Contact Kim at krloeb@mindspring.com for more info.

Saturday, March 21—A moderate 6.5 mile hike with a 2000 foot elevation gain. The trail switchbacks up the side of Marble Canyon and leads to Marble Falls. Rain cancels. Call or email Dave Keller @ 559.688.4813, or COACH24@aol.com.

Saturday, April 18—Middle Fork Trail to Panther Creek Falls (Sequoia National Park - 7 mile round trip, 1400 foot elevation gain) This is a moderate hike. The trail passes through chaparral and grassland above the middle fork of the Kaweah River to Panther Falls. Rain cancels. For more information contact Dave Keller at 559.688.4813 or COACHK24@aol.com

Wednesday, April 22—6 p.m. DINNER SOCIAL: Please join us for a “no host” dinner at Thai Basil Restaurant, 1423 E. Noble Ave., Mary’s Vineyard Shopping Center, Visalia. Contact Beverly Garcia for reservations at bev.garcia@kernkawah.sierraclub.org or 559.624.0199.

Film Review: "Everything is Cool" scrutinizes public's response to science of global warming

The film, "Everything is Cool," which was the Buena Vista program in January, is a documentary film with a dose of humor and a critical look at how our country views global warming 20 years after it was first identified as a potential threat. The film, directed by Daniel B. Gold and Judith Helfand, examines the denial, deception and foot-dragging by the corporate and political worlds that has accompanied attempts by the scientific community to publicize global warming and its implications. Gold and Helfand also co-directed and co-produced the film "Blue Vinyl," an award winning film that takes a critical environmental look at the vinyl siding industry.

No one is spared scrutiny in this film, including environmental groups like the Sierra Club. Viewpoints include those of a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, a PhD Weather Channel climatologist, a couple of social justice activists and an ex-government official fighting back at government global warming cover-up attempts.

The film seemingly poses the question, "Does the U.S. get global warming?" with an answer of "possibly." This movie has more to offer than a "just the facts" documentary film and would be suitable for all groups, whether they are environmentally oriented or not. Other ideas pointed to by the film are not just that global warming exists and can we as a society act cooperatively to reduce it, but also do we have the time needed to reverse it?

If there is a message for us to gain from this film, I would say it is for the Sierra Club to present convincing evidence to the average citizen that behavior change in response to climate change is necessary to insure some quality of life for all present and future living creatures on this planet. The film, produced in 2007, is unrated and 89 minutes in length. The special features include over an hour of supporting bonus footage.

—Donnel Lester

Mineral King offers Alaska program

"Challenges and Opportunities in Alaska" is the topic of a free program at the Tulare County Office of Education, 2637 W. Burrell Ave. in Visalia on Monday, April 13 at 7 p.m. The Mineral King group and Tulare County Audubon Society are co-sponsors of the event.

Taldi Walter, the speaker, is a staff member of Audubon Alaska. She will present an informative slideshow showcasing some of the important natural areas and brilliant birds found in wild Alaska. The presentation will explore some of Alaska's natural treasures set aside decades ago for the benefit of wildlife and the American public.

Walter will highlight the imminent and compelling challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Tongass National Forest, Chugach National Forest, and Alaska National Petroleum Reserve.

Walter's Masters thesis work took her to the Atlantic rainforest of Brazil, where she studied rainforest and invasive species ecology. Call Brian Newton 559. 904.5435 for information.

—Janet Wood

DESERT COMMITTEE OUTINGS (Continued from page 5)

For questions about Desert Committee outings in general, or to receive the outings list by e-mail, please contact Kate Allen at kj.allen@wildblue.net or 661.944.4056. More outings are listed at the wildblue.net address.

Friday-Sunday, March 6-8—Death Valley Wilderness Restoration: We will work with the Park Service to repair damage done by illegal off-road vehicles in the Panamint Mountain's Jail Canyon. Meet Friday afternoon at Ballarat, located in Panamint Valley south of the entrance to Jail Canyon, and car-caravan to our camping area for the weekend. Drive up Jail Canyon requires 4 WD, possibility of car pooling at the trail head. Work Saturday, happy hour & pot luck Saturday night, work will continue on Sunday until around noon. Leader: Kate Allen, HYPERLINK "<mailto:kj.allen@wildblue.net>" kj.allen@wildblue.net, 661.944.4056. CNRCC/Desert Committee

Sunday-Saturday, March 15-21— Escalante River Canyon Service Trip. Join us in our ongoing effort to eradicate Russian Olive from this beautiful red-rock canyon. We will work with Park Ranger Bill Wolverton, to gather and burn the slash from previous trips. Meet in Escalante, Utah on the 15th, caravan to the trailhead and hike in. Four days of work, one day of hiking in the canyon. Hike out on the 21st. Expect knee to thigh deep river crossings, cold nights, mild days and spectacular scenery. Participants need to bring their own gear, food and heavy leather work gloves. For more information go to: <http://home.comcast.net/~gorgesramble/site/> or contact leader Paul Plathe at 209.476.1498. Delta Sierra Group

Saturday-Sunday, March 14-15—Ghost Town Extravaganza: Come with us to this spectacular desert landscape near Death Valley to explore the ruins of California's colorful past. Camp at the historic ghost town of Ballarat (flush toilets & hot showers). On Sat, do a very challenging hike to ghost town Lookout City with expert Hal Fowler who will regale us with tales of this wild west town. Later we'll return to camp for Happy Hour, a potluck feast and campfire. On Sun, a quick visit to the infamous Riley townsite before heading home. Group size strictly limited. Send \$8 per person (Sierra Club), 2 sase, H&W phones, email, rideshare info to Ldr: Lygeia Gerard, P.O. Box 294726, Phelan, CA 92329; 760.868.2179. CNRCC Desert Committee.

MIDGEBUZZINGS



I was a high school freshman in 1948 when I first heard the newly coined word, “smog.” I had been aware for several years of the fading profiles of our mountains at this end of the San Joaquin Valley, which my mother attributed to increased human activity “stirring up the dust.” But smog was something new, resulting from automobiles, and limited, or so we thought, to the Los Angeles Basin. Better informed people understood the wider negative effects of human industry and population growth upon the environment. Aldo Leopold had just written his magnificent book calling for a land ethic, and efforts were being made by prescient members of the Sierra Club and others toward the permanent protection of wilderness areas as buffers against human development and expansion.

Public quarreling over the protection of wild lands began in earnest with the passing of the Wilderness Act in 1964. For the first time many in the general public became conscious and resentful of the concept of limits to growth. One of the most frequently asked questions was also the most specious: “What’s more important, people or trees?”

No one has addressed that question more effectively than the author, Jared Diamond, whose writing explores the failure of human societies to understand and treat their environmental problems in time to prevent disintegration. In his book, *Collapse*, he examines the history of failed cultures, especially those of Pitcairn and Easter Islanders, the Anasazi, the Maya, and the Vikings in Iceland, Vinland and Greenland. It is his thesis that in almost all cases, the primary cause of the death of these civilizations was deforestation.

Diamond begins with the apologia often expressed by scientists writing for the general public: an assurance that his concern rises out of greater love for humanity than for other species. The most effective environmentalists understand that if they do not speak to the “What’s More Important” question, they will not be heard at all and might be ostracized as Galileo was when he suggested that the earth is not the center of the universe. They know that a lecturing posture is anathema to the success of their enterprises. When interviewed, however, they may be quite wry about public incomprehension of the interdependence of species. My favorite example comes from a televised conversation with the great biologist, Edward Wilson. In effect he said this: If human beings were to disappear tomorrow, the earth would heal itself quickly. If ants were suddenly to vanish, our planet would become barren.

A poignant example of current environmental havoc is coal mining in West Virginia. Whole mountain tops are sheared off by giant machinery, and then dumped, spilling into streams that flow into primary rivers. When questioned about her approval of this practice, the head of the EPA said that it was the sole source of income for the people of that state. She did not mention alternative mining methods. By contrast, the sole sources of fuel and structural support material for the Anasazi really were the surrounding forests.

It is comforting to think of the future as one in which such problems will be overcome in time to save threatened species. But I must suggest that, in the light of this kind of rapaciousness and blind indifference to its consequences here and elsewhere around the world, it would be valuable to consider an Ark Principle by which we might succeed in permanent storage of the DNA of species besides our own. That the earth and all its creatures are intrinsically precious as gifts of creation is not a radical idea, any more than prayer is a radical practice. Aren’t they one and the same?

—Ann Williams

Executive Committee of the Kern-Kaweah Chapter

Chair: Georgette Theotig (Tehachapi), 661.822.4371. *Vice-chair:* Gordon Nipp (Bksf), 661.872.2432. *Secretary:* Arthur Unger (Bksf), 661.323.5569. *Treasurer:* Lorraine Unger (Bksf), 661.323.5569. Donnel Lester (Bksf), 661.831.6784. Richard Garcia (Min King), 559.624.0199. Ann Williams (Bksf), 661.324.1055. Mary Ann Lockhart (PMC), 661.242.0432. Ara Marderosian (Kernville), 760.378.4574.

Chapter ExCom Meetings: All Sierra Club members are always welcome to attend these meetings. Call 661.323.822.4371 to confirm all meeting dates as well as location and time.

Sequoia National Forest wants input by March 31 on new motorized trails proposals

The Sequoia National Forest released their Draft EIS for ORV Route Designation (Travel Management) on Jan. 30 with a comment deadline as March 31. The Preferred Alternative proposes to add 34.8 miles of unauthorized motorized trails to the existing transportation system, add five miles of unauthorized roads to the system, and allow public motor vehicle use on 13.7 miles of routes within Condor Roost Areas (you can read the details at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/projects/travel-management-eis/index.html>).

As we expected, the Draft EIS focuses too much on analyzing the potential impacts of designating new user-created routes and not enough on assessing the environmental and social impacts of existing National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) routes. The current transportation system continues to allow motor vehicle use in ecologically and socially important roadless areas, in proposed Wild and Scenic River corridors, in habitat of sensitive wildlife species, and in rare montane meadow habitat.

The Draft EIS is wholly inadequate in following the regulations established for travel management (36 CFR 212.5 b) and in addressing the environmental impacts associated with the current and proposed transportation systems. The Sequoia National Forest has not: a) identified the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for protection of National Forest System lands; b) identified the roads under their jurisdiction that are no longer needed to meet Forest Service management objectives, and therefore, should be decommissioned or considered for other uses; and c) completed a science-based analysis of the existing National Forest Transportation System to inform these decisions.

Several public meetings are scheduled over the next couple of weeks, including one on Feb. 21 from 2:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Clarion Hotel, 3540 Rosedale Highway in Bakersfield and another on Feb. 28 from 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. in Lake Isabella.

—Stan Van Velsor
The Wilderness Society

The Roadrunner

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 498
Bakersfield, CA



STAYING INFORMED:

Join our KERN-NEWS & KERN FORUM e-mail lists at: <http://kernkaweah.sierraclub.org>

Chapter Ex-com meetings: All Sierra Club members are always welcome to attend.

Earth friendly socks are available at www.sierraclubsocks.com to benefit both Sierra Club and the National Coalition for the Homeless.

Submit articles to *The Roadrunner* at sierraroadrunner@gmail.com. To contact Marjorie Bell, the editor, by phone, call 661.322.4891.

The Roadrunner is printed on 100% post consumer recycled paper.

BALLOT DIRECTIONS: Please vote for the candidates of your choice on the Kern Kaweah ballot forms below and mail to the address given on the form. Each member may vote for four Chapter Ex-Com candidates; then each member may vote on their group's ballot. If there are two or more members in a household, the other member(s) may use the same ballot form and supply their own check marks. **Deadline for voting: March 31, 2009.**

<p style="text-align: center;">BALLOT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chapter ExCom</p> <p>Send to: Roadrunner P.O. Box 3357 Bakersfield, CA 93385 (by March 31, 2009)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gordon Nipp <input type="checkbox"/> Richard Garcia <input type="checkbox"/> Lorraine Unger <input type="checkbox"/> Ara Madarosian <input type="checkbox"/> Write in</p> <p>_____</p> <p>For all Chapter members— Vote for only four.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BALLOT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Kaweah Group ExCom</p> <p>Send to: Diane Jetter 940 Vandalia Ave. Porterville, CA 93257 (by March 31, 2009)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Teresa Stump <input type="checkbox"/> Boyd Leavitt <input type="checkbox"/> Pamela Clark <input type="checkbox"/> Write in</p> <p>_____</p> <p>For Kaweah Group members only—Vote for three.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BALLOT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mineral King Group ExCom</p> <p>Send to: Sierra Club Mineral King P.O. Box 3543 Visalia, CA 93278 (by March 31, 2009)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joanne Dudley <input type="checkbox"/> John Kamansky <input type="checkbox"/> Cynthia Koval <input type="checkbox"/> Mary Moy <input type="checkbox"/> Write in</p> <p>_____</p> <p>For Mineral King Group members only—Vote for four.</p>
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BALLOT

Condor ExCom

Send to: Condor Group
P.O. GG
Frazier Park, CA 93222
(by March 31, 2009)

Fay Benbrook
 Rose Bryan
 Dale Chitwood
 Katherine King
 Mary Ann Lockhart
 Harry Nelson
 Mar Preston
 Dorothy Vokolek
 Rachel Yorkbridgers
 Write in

For Condor members—Vote for
eight (plus write in if desired).

BANQUET RESERVATION FORM (Please return)



I wish to attend the 2009 Annual Banquet of the Kern-Kaweah Chapter, Sierra Club, on March 28. I include a check @ \$24 per person.

PLEASE PRINT:

NAME(S) _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

NUMBER ATTENDING _____
TOTAL \$ AMOUNT (ENCLOSED): _____

____ I choose the vegetarian entrée (garlic spaghetti)

____ How many?

IMPORTANT: Please write your check in **BLACK INK.**

Write check out to: KERN-KAWEAH CHAPTER, SIERRA CLUB
Send check and this form to: Georgette Theotig, P.O. Box 38, Tehachapi, CA, 93581, by **March 24.** Thank you!