



SIERRA CLUB

TEHIPITE CHAPTER

Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter Elects 2026 Leadership

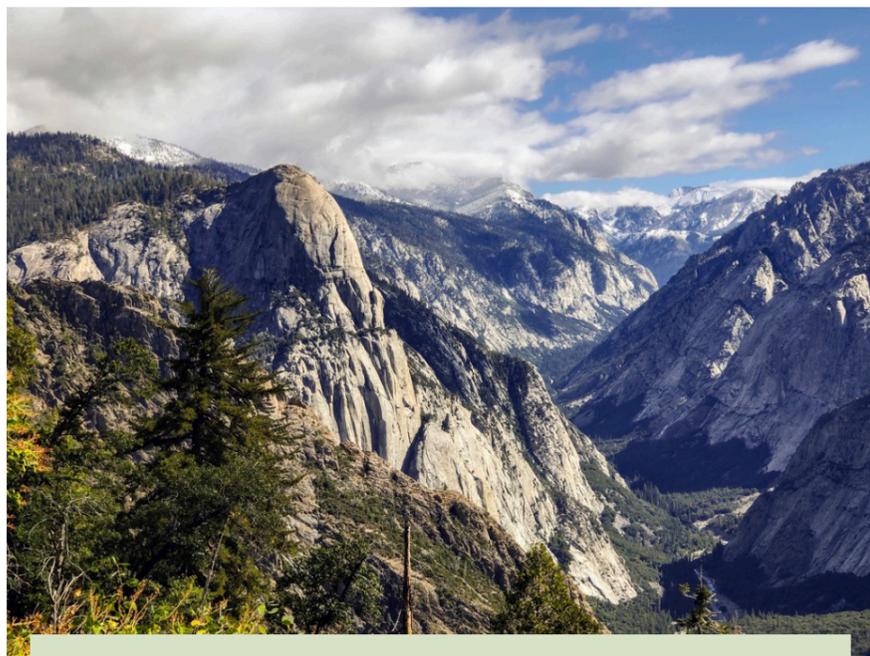
Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter members elected our Executive Committee (Excom) elections in our annual mail-and-online election in December and new officers in January. **Congratulations to Ken Wall, our new chair!** Ken is retired banker, and is actively engaged with a coalition addressing the Fresno County transportation sales tax, the No on SEDA Coalition (opposing the plan to vastly expand the city of Fresno into farmland east of the city), and the CEMEX mining proposal.

Our Excom is now comprised of JoAnne Clarke, Bill Fjellbo, Gary Lasky, Brenda Markham, Les Marsden, Ron Martin, Barbara Showalter, and Gerald Vinnard. Brenda serves as our Chapter Secretary and retired CPA JoAnne Clarke is our Chapter Treasurer.

Our webmaster is Bob Turner, Legal Chair is Gary Lasky, Fundraising Chair is Bill Fjellbo, and Programs chair is Karen Hammer.

Ron Martin continues as our capable Conservation Chair, which he has been ably managing for the past few years. The Conservation Committee covers our environmental issue areas, each with a lead person who keeps our chapter leadership informed of important developments at our monthly Conservation Committee meeting (on Zoom the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm, immediately preceding the Excom meeting).

Our issue leads are presently: • Air Quality: Carlos Garcia • Energy: Ron Martin • Climate: Connie Young • Land Use /Sprawl/Agriculture: Dan O'Connell • Toxics: Laura Rosenberger • Transportation/No on Measure C: Ken Wall • Wilderness/30x30: JoAnne Clarke • Yosemite National Park: Les Marsden.



Tshipite Dome, Kings Canyon National Park
(photo credit: Gary Stephens, I Love the Sierra Facebook group)

We have vacancies for a few Conservation issues, and are seeking one or more volunteers for the following issues: **Environmental Justice, Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra National Forest, and Water** (groundwater and/or river and stream diversions from, which are destroying the San Francisco Bay Delta). **No expertise is required!** Just an interest in learning about the issue. We have volunteer experts across California and can connect you with our network of Sierra Club volunteers who know your issue, to learn more and share ideas. If you are curious and might want to consider volunteering, contact the author (see below).

In addition to the above, our Tehipite Chapter is excited to have Dr. Barbara Showalter fill the vacancy of Outings Chair. Barbara has been trained and certified by the national Sierra Club and has begun to organize hikes and other outings. Anyone interested in leading a hike should contact the author to connect with Barbara.

Finally, this is an election year, and we have an **urgent need for individuals interested in serving on a candidate endorsement committee.** The national Sierra Club has a well-defined process for endorsing local, state legislative, and Congressional candidates, and this is the most fun (in your author's opinion) of any of the chapter's roles. Presently, we also have a vacancy for our **Political Chair** position. Please contact the author if you think you might be interested. Non-members can join the Sierra Club to participate.

A new program, the California Advocacy Committee, trains volunteers to lobby state legislators at their district offices, enabling a rapid-response network to respond to specific bills. By decentralizing this process, we can work close to home, at a convenient time and place. Brenda Markham is our chapter coordinator.

Our Chapter is one of thirteen in California, and Sierra Club California (SCCA) is our umbrella. With a staff of six, SCCA is based in our Sacramento office. Our Executive Director is Miguel Miguel. It is directed by the SCCA Excom, which includes our Ron Martin. Key activities include a state Conservation Committee which covers environmental issues of statewide concern: oil and gas, water, forests, environmental justice, energy/climate, and transportation. The California Political Committee conducts endorsements for U.S. Senators and statewide elected positions, including Governor. The California Legislative Committee reviews roughly 500 environmental bills each year.

Lastly, our national Council of Club Leaders (CCL) is a representative body with delegates from our 64 chapters. The CCL meets quarterly on Zoom and annually in person. A seven-member Executive Committee (including the author) represents our grassroots membership in discussions with the national Board of Directors and senior staff.

Also, our 64 Chapter Chairs, including Ken Wall, comprise the Chapter Chair Representatives (CCR). The Club was founded in 1892, with John Muir as our first President, and our charter states that we are a **volunteer-led** organization. Lately, that has come into question, as our staff numbers have grown to 600, serving our roughly 600,000 members, and the Club comes to resemble other, staff-driven "Big Green" non-profit NGOs.

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Join us on **Wednesday, February 18, at 7 PM** at the **Woodward Park Regional Library** (944 E. Perrin Ave. Fresno) when **Lee Terkelsen** will present excerpts from his ambitious documentary on the giant sequoias:

Big Trees - Big Impact

This documentary centers on how our emotional connection to the trees has shaped our history, environmental policies, art, culture, and politics. In just one of the 76 giant sequoia groves, nearly 8000 of the world's largest trees fell to the blade of the ax, setting off an environmental movement that continues to have implications. We will learn about the human stories, including one about Charlie Castro, an indigenous descendent, who spent nine hours in a sequoia tree while it was on fire to save the tree and, perhaps, the rest of Grant Grove in Kings Canyon National Park. Join us for what promises to be, not your typical program about giant sequoias!

ALSO: Save the Date! Our **2026 Tehipite Chapter Potluck Awards Banquet** will take place **March 14 at 5 PM** at the **Big Red Church** (First Congregational Church) Fresno. Please join us for a delightful evening with our Keynote Speaker, Robert Groos: photographer, birder, and storyteller extraordinaire. Details to follow. You can also check sierraclub.org/tehipite or facebook.com/tehipite



Credit: Lee Terkelson