



SIERRA CLUB

TEHIPITE CHAPTER

This month, to commemorate the New Year, our Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter will review some of our work in 2023 and our plans for 2024.

Sprawl in the City and County of Fresno: Just as our natural resources are being vacuumed up by corporations intent on accelerating the depletion of fossil fuels, the City and County of Fresno employ wishful thinking and outright denial of both natural and environmental laws to propose even more unsustainable urban sprawl into agricultural lands.

The City's Southeast Development Area (SEDA), is the latest fantasy-based proposal for an additional 130,000 residents, nearly all in single-family homes. Proposed between Fresno and Sanger, SEDA is to house a larger population than Clovis. With tax increases a forbidden subject in our region, and the City of Fresno's limited funds for roads and other infrastructure again destined for the edge of town, existing neighborhoods — even solidly middle-class ones — face declining health in the future. Without sufficient City funds to repair our crumbling infrastructure, homeowners will face declining property values as the City greenlights massive expansion. SEDA sets a precedent as the first large development in the County which does not require funding for new schools or fire and police services.

The Tehipite Chapter retained the CEQA attorney Doug Carstens to write detailed EIR comments critiquing the SEDA plan, which we believe violates state environmental law — not to mention common sense — just as the State of California and the courts are cracking down on cities that refuse to build multi-family and affordable housing.

For 2024, we can anticipate the long-awaited Fresno County General Plan Update, which no longer requires infrastructure before new housing is approved, and the return of the Friant Ranch project proposal thirteen years after it was originally proposed. The Sierra Club and League of Women Voters successfully halted this project after winning a landmark decision from the California Supreme Court in 2018.

Sequoia forest protection campaign: Our federal lands have come under assault by (now retired) Rep. Kevin McCarthy of Bakersfield. After ex-President Trump installed new management for Yosemite and Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks, Trump demanded in 2019 that the Parks produce a logging plan to join the U.S. Forest Service in managing the Park as an extractive industry might. Now, McCarthy's Orwellian "Save the Sequoias Act" bill would join together a number of federal agencies in a coalition to impose their industrial vision on Wilderness areas of the Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks, evading environmental review and denying forest science.

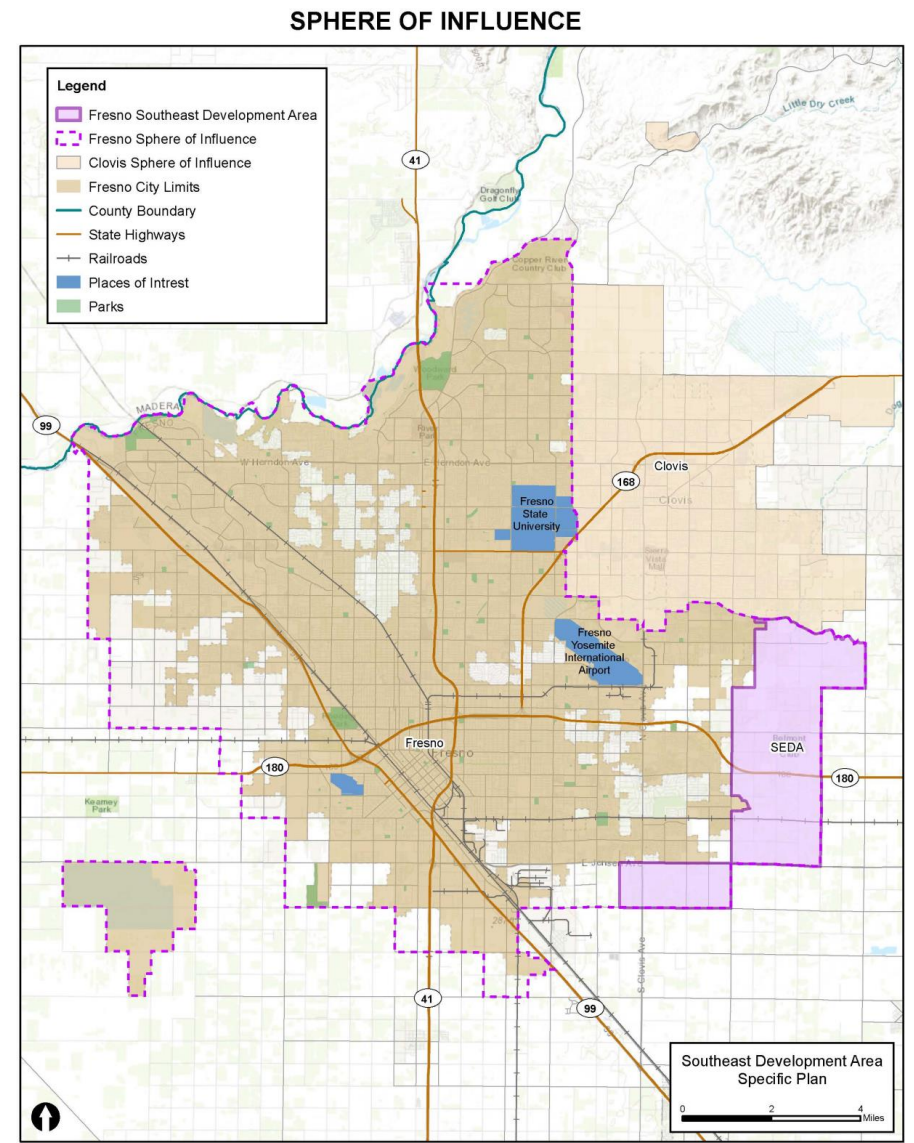
Recent, naturally occurring lightning-caused fires in the Parks, aggravated by the suppression of fire in the giant sequoia groves for more than a century, led to a loss of 8% of the sequoia trees. The National Park Service predicted that these trees may never grow back. However, recent photographs taken of the high-intensity burn areas reveal an emerald carpet of sturdy, 2-3 foot tall sequoia seedlings, just 15 months old. Embarrassed by this unexpected rebound of a tree species — which, after all, has adapted to high-intensity fire

The Sierra Club California/Nevada Wilderness team invites you to a Zoom presentation by Dr. Chad Hanson: "Stop Messing with Mother Nature: Keep Our Forests Wild." Author of the recent book *Smokescreen: Debunking Wildfire Myths to Save Our Forests and Our Climate*, Dr. Hanson will discuss the remarkable rejuvenation of giant sequoia groves following recent wildfires, how and why government agencies have misled the public, and how the media has gotten this issue so wrong regarding the misguided plan to create tree plantations in recently-burned Sequoia groves in designated Wilderness in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.



Chad Hanson visiting Redwood Mountain Grove, scorched by fire, with a carpet of giant sequoia seedlings. Kings Canyon National Park, Oct. 2023.

Please join us on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 5:30 pm on Zoom. To receive the Zoom link to this presentation, email JoAnne at jo_clarke@att.net.



Map 2.1 Sphere of Influence

for tens of millions of years — the Park Service and U.S. Forest Service have closed these groves to the public.

Our Fresno-based Tehipite Chapter has led Sierra Club opposition to this disastrous forest planning and the McCarthy bill. We filed a lawsuit against the Forest Service in federal court, retained some of the best forest litigation attorneys in the nation, the Earthrise Law Center in Portland, and persuaded the national Club to launch a comprehensive campaign to protect these majestic monarch trees from destruction. Our smaller partner groups have simultaneously challenged the National Park Service in Federal court. Our forests are needed to suck up atmospheric CO2, maintain cool and shade, preserve moisture, and retain carbon to limit global warming. And the only living giant sequoia groves are all in the southern Sierra.

Spring 2024 will bring our annual Earth Day Fresno celebration in April and we're excited to see the return of our traditional March potluck banquet, following an extended, Covid-based hiatus. The public is welcome, of course. Stay tuned to this page for details.

January General Meeting IN-PERSON at the Woodward Park Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. Fresno. Join us **Wednesday, January 17 at 7 PM** for Master Gardener Gwen Olshove. Gwen will present "Making the Most of Warm Season Vegetables," covering such topics as designing your own garden, growing from plants and seeds, how to improve your garden soil, encouraging the good bugs, and preventing garden problems.



If you'd like to receive a 2-page planting guide that you can print and bring to the meeting, email Karen Hammer at ecuagirl45@yahoo.com and type "planting guide" in the subject line.