



Sierra Club California 2024 Impact Report

A Wave of Water Victories

Sierra Club California has continued to work over the past year to push the Newsom administration and the Legislature to face the demands of a changing climate while protecting our imperiled ecosystems. Potential impacts from unsustainable water diversions and harmful water infrastructure have jeopardized our communities' access to a resilient water supply. We've worked tirelessly to ensure California leaves environmentally destructive, outdated projects, like the Delta Tunnel and Sites Reservoir, in the past.

Valley Water

Sierra Club California has continued to advocate for the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) to reduce reliance on diversions from the overburdened San Francisco Bay Delta, and increase investment in sustainable water solutions, including conservation, water recycling, and stormwater capture. We won a huge victory at the beginning of this year when Valley Water released a Water Supply Master Plan portfolio that includes investments in these innovative local water supply solutions, and excludes projects Sierra Club California has fought hard against.

Metropolitan Water District

We have also made major strides in advocacy at the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), where we have worked to increase inclusive public engagement and push MWD to invest in a resilient water portfolio. Sierra Club California successfully advocated to protect funding for water conservation programs and water recycling projects that would increase MWD's water supply resiliency, without relying on increased diversions from the Delta. We also successfully fought to reduce the proposed property tax rates that would fund MWD's participation in the Delta Tunnel Project. We will continue to fight alongside our allies to promote sustainable projects like the Climate Action Master Plan for Water, and local investments, like water recycling, that will lead MWD into a resilient future for Southern California.

Delta Tunnel

As the Delta Tunnel project moves forward, we continue our fight against it. Following release of the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) earlier this year, Sierra Club California joined litigation to challenge the project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). DWR subsequently filed a water right application with the State Water Resources Control Board, which Sierra Club California has protested. While those processes are ongoing, we continue to advocate at Metropolitan Water District, Valley Water, and across the State against this harmful and expensive project.



Photo by USFWS Pacific Southwest Region

In May, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) released an updated cost analysis for the Delta Tunnel, in which they estimated the project would cost over \$20 billion. Sierra Club California and our allies worked with Dr. Jeffery Michaels to shed light on DWR's claims about the benefits of the project, culminating in the release of a report evaluating the Agency's cost-benefit analysis for the project. This report, which highlights critical failures in DWR's analysis, has been distributed to the Water Agencies considering investing in the project, State decision-makers, and the public.

Bay Delta Plan

Sierra Club California has continued to advocate for an inclusive, robust, and meaningful update to the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan. The State Water Board released its Draft Staff Report for Phase Two of the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan in September of 2023. We mobilized volunteers to speak at the three-day hearing in support of environmentally protective flows and against the Voluntary Agreements (VAs), which fail to provide sufficient in-stream flows to protect species recovery and water quality for Delta communities. In April of this year, we mobilized once again at another three-day workshop at the State Water Board to push back against claims that the VAs could protect the Bay Delta.

Sierra Club California will continue to push for strong environmental protections for the Bay Delta ecosystem as the Board moves forward with the Bay Delta Plan Update.

At the Legislature

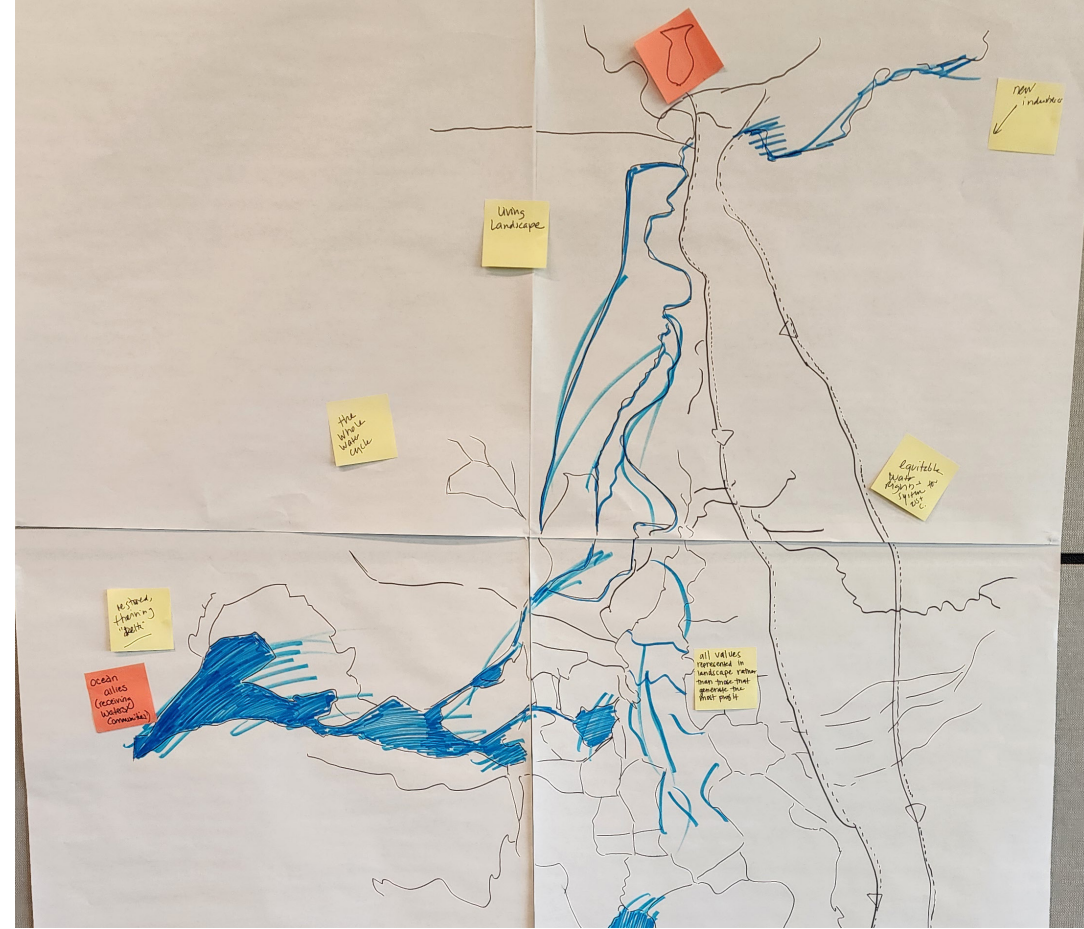
Last summer, representatives of Tribal nations, environmental justice groups, conservation groups, and the fishing community held a “Water Day of Action” event at the Capitol in Sacramento to demand better management of California’s water resources. As a result of our actions last year, the legislature successfully passed SB 389 to close a loophole in the water rights system and allow the State Water Board to investigate water diversions and ensure they are in compliance with a legal water right permit. When the legislative session resumed in 2024, we mobilized our volunteers across the state to advocate for our remaining legislative priorities at the local level through in-district lobbying. We also joined our allies at the Capitol to promote bills that would increase transparency, equity, and accountability in water rights enforcement and advance the human right to water. We look forward to seeing our remaining priorities make it to the Governor’s desk later this year, and continuing the fight during next year’s legislative session.

An Emerging Coalition

In August, the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians invited Sierra Club California, along with other environmental organizations, to participate in a two-day retreat to discuss priorities for California water management. At the center of the discussion was how to build, maintain, and expand relationships based on trust and mutual understanding, acknowledging that the heart of California’s water system—the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (Bay Delta)—is in serious trouble.

We discussed the importance of integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into water policy decision-making at all levels and set overarching, long-term goals for achieving and maintaining a healthy Bay Delta water system. This emerging coalition centers on California Tribal Nations and is supported by environmental justice groups, fishing groups, and local Delta community organizations.

Sierra Club California will engage in this coalition to achieve a more equitable and sustainable future for California’s water resources. Given the Sierra Club’s history of fraught relationships with tribal nations, this commitment to foster collaboration, equity, and justice, as embedded in our 2030 strategic framework, represents our hope for a new era of reconciliation and restoration.



Our Incredible Statewide 30x30 Progress

The 30x30 movement is a global pledge to safeguard 30% of Earth's lands and oceans by 2030, en route to the goal of preserving "half earth" by 2050.

Spearheaded by environmental organizations and supported by policymakers globally, 30x30 asserts that to secure a liveable future on our planet we must: protect and restore biodiversity; expand access to nature; and mitigate and build resilience to the climate crisis. We have just 5 and a half years left to reach our 30x30 goals, and the grassroots momentum across California couldn't be stronger. It's a testament to the power of collective action, and the support of our members that we've been able to achieve so much so quickly.

However, our work is far from over. California is grappling with the imminent threat of endangered species being eradicated, and invaluable ecosystems being permanently degraded. 30x30 offers us a spark of hope, and it's up to us to help nurture that flame. 30x30 isn't just a campaign, it's emblematic of our commitment to confront the climate crisis head-on.

A Banner Year for Conservation Efforts

The California 30x30 Campaign, a partnership between Sierra Club California, the Sierra Club Grassroots Network, and the Conservation Campaign, leverages our expansive reach and deep-rooted volunteer network to support the vital goals of the movement. We collaborate with a statewide coalition of environmental groups to promote conservation, equity, and access to public lands, as well as hold the state accountable to its 30x30 commitment.

Connecting With Nature and Our Volunteers

Outings have been a crucial part of our 30x30 campaign this year. Outings help build awareness of and support for 30x30 and our top Local Conservation Priorities. Getting outside and reconnecting with nature helps reaffirm what we're fighting for. Outings energize our local 30x30 activists, expand our base of supporters and volunteers, develop the skills of our volunteer leaders, and engage with local elected officials and state Senate and Assembly members to visit 30x30 priority areas in order to educate them and gain their support. Earlier this year, the Angeles Chapter hosted a successful 30x30 hike at Elephant Hill in partnership with Save Elephant Hill's MRCA Off-Highway Vehicle outreach and education project and the Sierra Club Activist Academy. Elephant Hill, a 110-acre hillside in El Sereno, is the largest remaining open space in Northeast Los Angeles - native

Tongva Land. Cherished by generations of local residents, Elephant Hill has diverse habitats, abundant wildlife, and even an underground intermittent spring. However, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in unauthorized off-roading which harms the environment, public safety, and community health. The 30x30 campaign's vision for Elephant Hill is to protect the hillside, increase public access, and eliminate unauthorized off-roading and the threat it poses both to the environment and community health and safety. This coming year, the 30x30 campaign will be focused on expanding outings and broadening our advocacy across the state. The Loma Prieta Chapter led a hike in the Portola Redwoods State Park recently, focused on biodiversity protection. We will continue expanding outings and advocacy in the next year.

Strengthening our 30x30 Legislative Commitments

30x30 won a major victory in the legislature this year by protecting ongoing conservation funding available through the Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF) in this year's budget process. The HCF provides critical funding for land acquisition and restoration projects which support wildlife habitat across California. Because of the state's budget deficit, the legislature proposed cuts to the ongoing funding commitment for the HCF program. Sierra Club California staff, activists, and our allies advocated at the legislature and successfully protected the future of this important program, which will provide a reliable, ongoing source of state funding for conservation and restoration projects and help us meet our 30x30 goal.



30x30 became a State goal by Executive Order in 2020, but it became official state policy by law last year through the passage of SB 337. Through the leadership of Senator Min, and advocacy by Sierra Club California activists and our allies we are thrilled to see this momentum for 30x30 growing in the legislature. Sierra Club California is supporting federal conservation efforts by advocating at the state legislature in support of resolutions to urge the President to establish new National Monuments in California, including: S ttitla, Chuckwalla, Joshua Tree, and Kw'ts n National Monuments.

Making Your Voice Heard at the Capitol

On Earth Day, our 30x30 team of staff and volunteers were in Sacramento advocating with Power In Nature - a statewide coalition of over 100 community groups, environmental and conservation organizations, land trusts, indigenous organizations and tribal members - to advance California's 30x30 commitment.

The coalition's legislative priorities for the year include protection and restoration of wetlands, increasing coordination and cross-agency alignment on 30x30, advancing fish and wildlife connectivity, promoting equity and access to the outdoors, advancing ocean science, and supporting the designation of National Monuments. Sierra Club California and Power In Nature met with 34 legislative offices in total to educate members and staff on these important issues. We will continue our efforts as the legislature closes out this session to see these priorities make it to the Governor's desk!

At the heart of Power In Nature's lobbying efforts is a commitment to shaping a sustainable future for generations to come.



Photo by Sierra Club



Photo by Sierra Club, Kelsey Judo



Ending Public Investment in Fossil Fuels

Policy Strategist Jakob Evans at CalPERS headquarters with representatives from ACCE Action and AFSCME 3299 before giving public comment to CalPERS' board demanding that it exit Exxon.

As the climate crisis continues, its impacts are only becoming more visible in our lives and in the economy. Climate change will impact every company, every sector, and every market all across the globe. If no further action is taken, these losses will impact people's ability to retire with the economic security they deserve.

The California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) is the largest public pension fund in the United States, controlling assets valuing \$465.9 billion as of 2023 and responsible for the retirements of over 2 million Californians. As stewards of public resources and the retirement savings of many people, public pension funds play an especially important role in protecting our money from the impacts of climate change.

Due to its size and prestige, CalPERS is influential amongst investors and can engage companies to adopt climate standards. CalPERS holds an estimated \$9.4 billion in fossil fuel companies, including ExxonMobil, the largest oil company in the United States. However, ExxonMobil refuses to engage seriously on climate and filed a lawsuit against its shareholders who asked the corporation to pursue

climate action targets. Exxon's attack on shareholder rights – the ability of investors like CalPERS to engage on important topics like climate and labor rights – and climate targets spurred environmentalists, labor unions, and community organizations including Sierra Club and organized by California Common Good to call on CalPERS to exit their investment from Exxon. This coalition issued a letter to the CalPERS board demanding that CalPERS take leadership and vote against Exxon's Executive team at its annual shareholder meeting.

CalPERS did that and more. Its leadership against Exxon helped support requests from seven state Treasurers, including California's Fiona Ma, for shareholders and investment firms to stand against Exxon's executives. However, the Exxon leadership that supported the lawsuit to block action to pursue climate targets is still in power. The efforts of Sierra Club California and our allies put Exxon on the defensive and have paved the way for CalPERS to exit from the corporation. We've also encouraged CalPERS that if their typical corporate engagement strategies don't work, they must escalate their response.

Sierra Club California is now calling on CalPERS to fully exit from Exxon, beginning with a commitment to reject future purchases of bonds from the corporation. Sierra Club California continues to demand that CalPERS maintain its commitment to sustainable investments and increase its transparency in its sustainable investments. We'll be engaging over the next year to hold CalPERS accountable to its sustainability promises and ensure that it lives up to its proud role as a climate leader.

CalPERS is a nationwide leader in sustainable investments. It must maintain this leadership by exiting Exxon and ensuring that its sustainable investments include commitments to affordable housing and companies providing good, union jobs during our transition to renewable energy.



2023 *by the numbers*

We receive most funding from individual donors like you who believe in our cause. Every dollar invested is channeled into transformative action—fueling grassroots initiatives, empowering volunteers, advancing policy changes, and conserving California for generations to

100% Budget Spent in California

65% Giving from Committed Individuals

1,484 Generous Individual Donors

22% Funding from National Office

12% Giving from Foundations

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Get Involved

Donate

Looking for ways to contribute to protect California's environment and support our work? Give back by becoming a c(3) and/or c(4) donor which helps fuel our mission in our State Capitol. Donate at sierraclub.org/california.ways-give.

Volunteer

Inspired to make a difference? Volunteer with us! We have opportunities available across the state in-person and remote. Sign up at sierraclub.org/California/Volunteer. If you would like to learn more about our volunteer program, email Destiny Villarreal at destiny.villarreal@sierraclub.org

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Photo by Sierra Club