

Vol. 20, No. 4 of 6

August - September 2020

# Condor Call

Journal of Los Padres Chapter Sierra Club  
Serving Ventura & Santa Barbara Counties



© Photo by Pete Scifres

Truth-tells ... Wildbills ... Go Electric ... Go bikes ...Go Outside

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# The Sierra Club confronts past, looks to future

*Editor's note: On July 22, Sierra Club Director Michael Brune posted an article titled "Pulling Down Our Monuments," that asserted "It's time to take down some of our own monuments, starting with some truth-telling about the Sierra Club's early history." That includes the club's icon John Muir who "was not immune to the racism peddled by many in the early conservation movement." Of course, it generated some criticism, but also praise. Below are excerpts, read the whole Op-ed here:*

<https://tinyurl.com/ClubLooksInward>

By Michael Brune

The Sierra Club is a 128-year-old organization with a complex history, some of which has caused significant and immeasurable harm. As defenders of Black life pull down Confederate monuments across the country, we must also take this moment to reexamine our past and our substantial role in perpetuating white supremacy.

As the most iconic figure in

Sierra Club history, Muir's words and actions carry an especially heavy weight. They continue to hurt and alienate Indigenous people and people of color who come into contact with the Sierra Club.

In the early years, the Sierra Club was basically a mountaineering club for middle- and upper-class white people who worked to preserve the wilderness ... The Sierra Club maintained that basic orientation until at least the 1960s because membership remained exclusive. Membership could only be granted through sponsorship from existing members, some of whom screened out any applicants of color.

The whiteness and privilege of our early membership fed into a very dangerous idea -- one that's still circulating today. It's the idea that exploring, enjoying, and protecting the outdoors can be separated from human affairs. Such willful ignorance is what allows some people to shut their eyes to the reality that the wild places we love are also the ancestral homelands of Native peoples, forced off their lands in the decades or centuries before they became national parks. It allows them to overlook, too, the fact that only people insulated from systemic racism and brutality can afford to focus solely on preserving wilderness.

As writer Julian Brave NoiseCat says, "The environment is no longer a white sanctuary. The messy business of society, power, and race is everywhere and intertwined."

The Sierra Club that I want to belong to not only acknowledges that reality, it also works to counter racism and exclusion wherever it occurs ...

To begin with, we are redesigning our leadership

*continued on page 3*

## EAVESDROPS

**"John Muir eventually came to learn more about Native Americans, to openly admire them and to decry cruel treatment ... he was flawed in a terrible way, he showed himself capable of learning at least somewhat, and he left a rich legacy, an incredible trove of natural beauty. Now it's time to make sure it was made for all of us."**

~ LA Times editorial on July 24, which also said "good for the Sierra Club" for admitting to its white privilege beginnings and starting to repair it via "racially and ethnically diverse leadership."

## Fight looms over trucking oil

A coalition of major environmental groups opposes ExxonMobil using trucks to transport offshore oil to refineries, and Santa Barbara County's final environmental impact report released in July gives them no comfort that is anywhere near safe.

No doubt the county will hear from that coalition as well as the public during hearings set for Sept. 2 and 9 on the EIR before voting on it. All details on the plan are here:

<https://tinyurl.com/OilTruckPlan>

"Trucks are the least safe way to transport oil — in human death, property destruction, and amount of oil spilled," said Katie Davis,

chair of our Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter. "Not only that, but this environmental report is severely lacking by leaving out the oil spills and other risks of restarting the aging oil rigs and Gaviota Coast oil facilities, which were one of the largest sources of air pollution in the county."

"No wonder this proposal has faced immense backlash and opposition from Chumash elders to students to businesses to city councils," she concluded.

The EIR data declares there would be significant, unavoidable impacts, including effects on wildlife and cultural resources



Our chapter has joined dozens of other groups and the public for years, opposing Exxon's bid to truck its offshore oil along our highways. Here, we protested at the SB County Administration Building last year. (Photo by Gabriel Vargas)



The Forest Service's display at last year's Ventura County Fair. The Protecting America's Wilderness Act contains six previously separate bills that together recognize more than 1.3 million acres as Wilderness across the West, including a new 400-mile Condor National Trail. (Photo by Condor John) To understand the scope of this important act, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/WildFactSheet>

## Wild bills can't be killed

**BULLETIN:** *A few days later July 23, Congress passed the biggest investment for National Parks in decades, The Great American Outdoors Act (more details below).*

By John Hankins

In an important multi-purpose action, the House passed the bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for the 2021 fiscal year by a margin of 295-125 on July 21. The must-pass bill provides funding and oversight for the nation's defense and security needs but also includes the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act.

in the event of an oil spill from a tanker truck. But it does not analyze the numerous harmful impacts of bringing Exxon's three offshore platforms back online.

"The county's report fails to disclose the devastating impacts that will result if ExxonMobil is allowed to resume oil drilling in the Santa Barbara Channel and truck oil along our scenic highways," said Linda Krop, chief counsel for the SB Environmental Defense Center, which represents Get Oil Out! and Santa Barbara County Action Network (SBCAN). "ExxonMobil's proposal will result in more oil spills, air pollution, and increased climate change at a time when we need to pursue clean energy alternatives."

The plan calls for loading up to 70 oil-filled trucks per day at its Las Flores facility for transport on coastal Highway 101 and Route 166, 24 hours a day, seven days a week to refineries in Kern County and Santa Maria.

A majority of SB County voters oppose the notion, according to a recent poll that concludes nearly 3 out of 4 respondents said they were concerned "about the safety of our local highways ..."

ExxonMobil's platforms were shut down in 2015 after the Plains All American Pipeline ruptured and

*continued on page 2*

"What the House has done, by inserting the bill into must-pass legislation, is force the Senate's consideration. Protection under the Wild and Scenic River and Wilderness Acts has just become much more likely this year," said Rebecca August of Los Padres ForestWatch, who is also our chapter's rep in the Arguello Group (Northern SB County).

"We are on a roll," said Jim Hines, our chapter's vice-chair, as the NDAA also carries the Protecting America's Wilderness Act as an amendment.

The Heritage and Wilderness acts are valuable to our Central Coast region and are supported by Rep. Salud Carbajal; they now go to the House and Senate to negotiate their respective bills to finalize amendments, most likely after the August recess. The companion Public Lands Act is also mixed in, introduced by Sen. Kamala Harris.

Hines said the acts would affect these local lands:

~ Pine Mountain-Reyes Peak proposed clearcutting project over 250 acres. The project site is now just outside of a new federal wilderness area, so this designation would not stop the clearcutting, but since it's close to the wilderness area, we have a strong argument that we need a protected buffer. ForestWatch has provided a link to lobby the Forest Service to protect that ridge area here: <https://p2a.co/zen6T1>

~ Los Padres National Forest lands, the Carrizo Plain and the Rim of the Valley Corridor Protection Act (affecting wildlife corridor and open space lands in Ventura and LA counties).

~ Uranium mine proposal in the Los Padres above Lake Casitas. The bill expands the existing Matilija Wilderness Area south to include federal lands in the Lake Casitas Watershed (where the mine is proposed).

"The southern expansion also includes lands which made up part of my ancestors' ranch in the area which now is Lake Casitas and the

Los Padres NF; it would nice to see the land that I grew up on protected forever," Hines said.

~ In a separate action on July 23, the House voted to approve the Great American Outdoors Act 310-107; the Senate passed it 73-25 in June. President Trump has pledged to sign it.

Over five years, it would set up to \$9.5 billion for backlogged maintenance, road, and facilities for the National Park Service, which is expected to create a possible 100,000 jobs, not counting the boost to businesses in nearby communities.

"It would also set up a royalty fee on federal offshore oil gas and oil drilling with the monies used for land acquisition for national public lands and set up grants for local cities and counties to use for outdoor recreation purposes," Hines added.

There is also a possible side effect to all this bipartisan, environmental action, according to Hines.

"We are also slowing down the vote to approve anti federal lands zealot William Pendley, who was nominated by the President to lead the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Pendley has made his stated goal to sell off YOUR national public lands in the western U.S. a top priority."

"A number of Republican U.S. Senators up for election this November are now concerned about how their support for Trump's nominee will impact their re-election chances."

"All of our lobbying even during these times of stay at home and lobbying remotely has finally paid off," he concluded.

## COVER PHOTO

A beautiful scene at Matilija Falls in the spring, worth the 9.6 mile "tough hike" up Matilija Canyon where you'll find pools, alders, sycamores and more. Perhaps the Lady of the Lake? (© Photo by Pete Scifres)

# Oil setbacks...literally

By Katie Davis

## Step Forward on Setbacks

Given the undue influence of oil lobbyists in Sacramento and their insistence on being able to drill right next to people's houses, it is gratifying to see AB345, a bill calling for setbacks from homes, schools, and hospitals.



It's making some forward progress with passage in the Assembly and a hearing in the Senate Natural Resources Committee. Research proves that living near oil wells makes people sick and causes premature births. Anyone who has smelled the nauseating fumes near a drill site could tell you it's unhealthy.

Not waiting for the state, the new Ventura General Plan update to be voted on by the Board of Supervisors in September includes oil well setbacks of 1,500 feet from homes and 2,500 feet from schools. It also specifies that pipelines must be used to transport oil and wastewater off site -- not trucks, which are the least safe way to transport oil.

It also prohibits flaring

and venting of gas, except for emergencies. Plus, it calls for more climate action, including a building code that moves us off gas and toward healthier, more affordable and efficient, electric homes and buildings. Folks in Ventura County can email with the subject "General Plan update comment" to ask the Board to make it a uniform 2,500 oil setback and to applaud the positive progress: [clerkoftheboard@ventura.org](mailto:clerkoftheboard@ventura.org)

## Exxon Drags On

SB County should take note of Ventura's pending ban on oil trucking as it considers ExxonMobil's proposal to expand oil trucking along accident prone sections of the 101 and 166.

Exxon's offshore oil production on the Gaviota coast has been shut down since the Plains pipeline spill in 2015 that killed hundreds of animals and coated beaches from Goleta down to Orange county with oil. Without a pipeline, it is proposing to restart offshore oil production and then truck the oil via 70 tankers a day, endangering all of us who drive those roads.

Dozens of environmental and community organizations, businesses, coastal cities, and the

Goleta school board are on record opposing the plan. A poll found 3 out of 4 Santa Barbara county residents concerned about it, and there have been large protests at every one of the hearings on this project.

Exxon's strategy is to claim that the county and local schools are reliant on oil revenue. This is a lie. Oil revenue was a fraction of 1% of county revenue back in 2014 when Exxon was at full production. Even with Exxon's shutdown, property taxes to schools are up. For instance, Santa Ynez High school, which they claim has been most affected, has had a 14% increase in property tax revenue since the shutdown, not a decrease.

Oil revenues are paltry compared to contributions of all other property and business taxpayers. They are also dwarfed by cleanup costs and economic hit from spills. For instance, the state of CA budgeted \$100 million of taxpayer money for decommissioning after Venoco's bankruptcy. It's typical. We pay to clean up oil's messes.

Exxon's project is unhealthy, dangerous, bad for the climate, and costly. Take a moment to add your opposition here: <https://tinyurl.com/NoOilTrucks>

## Crimson Cash

In 2016, a Crimson oil pipeline valve failed, leaking at least 44,000 gallons of oil down Ventura's Hall Canyon, flowing amongst homes and near the high school. An early morning resident taking a walk alerted officials, and it was stopped before it could reach the ocean.

The DA's office filed suit on the "Grove Incident" and won a civil settlement on July 21 for \$1.3 million and an addition \$300,000 against its contractor CD Lyon Construction.

That's \$36 bucks per gallon because a worker neglected to tighten the valve! However, a homeowners' lawsuit is still pending seeking \$16 million. Remnants of the oil remain along the gorge, estimated to be 6,000-14,000 gallons. Crimson has been responsible for 11 spills in the state since 2006, including a 280,000-gallon leak also in Ventura in 2008, according to the *LA Times*.

"The public should know that when an oil spill happens in California, we will hold those responsible accountable and require a thorough and rapid cleanup and restoration," said Thomas Cullen of the state's Fish & Wildlife office.

## Appropriate Appropriations

Not only do majorities of Americans oppose offshore oil drilling, so does the California congressional delegation. A letter dated July 2 was signed by 31 members opposes drilling off the coast of CA. Our own Rep. Salud Carbajal helped get a provision in the Interior's appropriations bill for the 2021 fiscal year prohibiting the use of funds for any new offshore leases. It is also a win of sorts that the Trump administration is delaying their new offshore oil lease plan until after the November election due to its unpopularity. Be sure to register to vote!

<https://registertovote.ca.gov>



The Blob approached the SB County Admin Building during a protest against Exxon trucking its oil on our highways. (Photo by Gabriel Vargas)

# No relief from carbon

By Sean Cummings

For months, climate experts have urged governments to center renewable energy and infrastructure in their economic revivals, seeing the drop in global emissions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as a chance to transition to a greener future.

However, as we take steps to reopen, greenhouse gas emissions have quickly rebounded. Although global CO2 levels had fallen 17% from 2019 levels by early April, they've since climbed to just 5% below 2019 levels. Bloomberg reports roughly \$509 billion in stimulus money going to the carbon economy worldwide, while low-carbon industries got only \$12.3 billion.

And although the pandemic has dealt a major blow to the petroleum industries, bankrupt companies leave behind unplugged wells leaking methane—currently two million in the U.S. alone.

Recent heat waves make clear the necessity of taking this opportunity to permanently reduce global emissions. Siberia reached 100-degree temperatures and in our own south-southwest, officials must weigh social distancing requirements against the need to provide public cooling centers for heat-stricken communities.

Rising coastal flooding risks drive the point home. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows U.S. cities in the coastal south experienced 2-3 flooding days in 2000; last year it was in the teens. NOAA projects double to triple this amount by 2030 and coastal cities flooding 25-75 days annually by 2050.

With outcomes like these, we need a green rebound from the pandemic. A recent paper in *Nature Scientific Reports* says our current atmospheric CO2 (415 parts per million) matches peak levels of the Pliocene, 3.3 million years ago. Then temperatures were 3-4 degrees Celsius hotter and sea level twenty meters higher. Pre-

lockdown emissions rates would push us further back to levels of 15 million years ago.

Assumptions about how global climate would respond to continued emissions have remained steady for decades: a doubling of CO2 from pre-industrial levels would yield a 66% chance of global warming, averaging out to around three degrees Celsius. Recent studies estimate up to five degrees, which suggests our worst-case estimates aren't extreme enough.

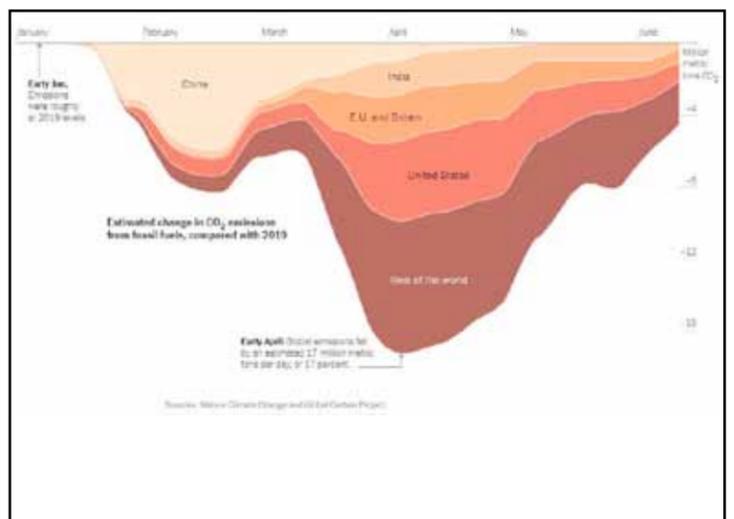
However, a more recent study estimates a smaller range (between 2.6 - 3.9 degrees Celsius). Raising the minimum end of the range to 2.6 degrees eliminates any possibility that luck will save us, undermining denialist arguments in favor of inaction, while lowering the maximum end to 3.9 degrees questions previous worst-case scenarios.

While this tighter range may lessen uncertainty, it still allows for plenty of climatic variability, much of which we already experience. A recent study in *Science* ranks 2000-2018 as California's driest stretch in 1,200 years, but places 1980-1998 as the wettest.

This pattern exemplifies climate change in the state: while our average precipitation has remained relatively stable, that average comes increasingly from alternating, back-to-back extremes.

California's precipitation also falls increasingly as rain rather than snow, replacing the slow-melting Sierra snowpack with short but intense deluges and making water capture and storage more difficult.

Locally, the reelection of Joan Hartmann has ensured Santa Barbara County a few more good steps toward mitigating these challenges. The Board of Supervisors began the two-year process in July of designing a greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan, starting with a consultant. The county aims to get to 50% below 2007 emission levels, or 675,900 tons per year, by 2030.



When Covid locked down the world, global emissions fell by about 17%, yet now in June-July they are spewing back up. (Source: Nature Climate Change and Global Carbon Project)

## Exxon Trucking...

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spilled thousands of gallons of oil along the California coast.

California suffers hundreds of oil-truck incidents a year, and many result in oil spills. There were 216 trucking accidents along the route from 2015 to 2020, CHP data show, resulting in nine deaths and 92 injuries. Just on March 21, a tanker truck crashed off Highway 166, spilling more than 4,500 gallons of oil into the Cuyama River above Twitchell Reservoir.

Offshore oil itself also poses unacceptable risks of spills that threaten marine life along with air

and water pollution. We know this from the massive 1969 oil blowout, the 2015 Refugio pipeline break and other lesser spills.

Restarting the offshore platforms will also generate enormous levels of greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to climate change, undermining goals set by the county's Energy and Climate Action Plan adopted in May 2015.

The coalition opposing the plan includes the groups mentioned above along with Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation, 350 Santa Barbara, Center for Biological Diversity, Food and Water Action, GOO!, UCSB reps and SB Surfrider Foundation.

## Condor Call

[www.sierraclub.org/lospadres](http://www.sierraclub.org/lospadres) ~ All phone numbers 1-805 area code

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Photos, news, tips always welcome!

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# Club presidents show diversity at the top

Sierra Club has elected a new national Board of Directors for the upcoming board term, 2020-2021 and tapped Ramón Cruz of Puerto Rico as President, becoming the first Latino President in the organization's 128-year history.

Sierra Club's National Board of Directors is democratically elected by members and serves the organization's 3.8 million members and supporters.

Cruz has over 20 years of experience and advocacy at the intersection of sustainability, environmental and energy policy, urban planning, and climate change. He has worked in the public sector as the Deputy Director of the state environmental regulatory agency in Puerto Rico and held senior positions at the Environmental Defense Fund, Partnership for New York City and Institute for Transportation and Development Policy.

"I recognize that my term comes during the enormously difficult and unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic, as well as during the dark threat to the environment of the Trump administration. While the

challenges we face are daunting, the magnitude of our response must meet the moment with a responsibility to ensure that we advocate effectively for policies that put front and center protecting the most vulnerable among us."

Cruz's top priorities as President include:

~ Advancing the Sierra Club's movement toward equity and justice, especially by ensuring that the organization is an inclusive space for all people to contribute to a safe environment and working in partnership with local groups nationwide.

~ Doubling down on the organization's work to defeat the anti-environmental agenda of the Trump administration and the fleet of industry lobbyists he has put in charge.

Hear Cruz speak on how the virus "has exposed major inequalities in America":

## Santa Barbara, Ventura gardens open

The botanical gardens in both Santa Barbara and Ventura counties are open during the quarantine.

The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden officially reopened to the public in July 10th after a two-month closure prompted by Covid-19 followed by a phased two-month opening to its membership. It also offers a virtual visit via the website at: [www.SBBG.org](http://www.SBBG.org)

## Confronting...

*continued from page 1*

structure so that Black, Indigenous, and other leaders of color at the Sierra Club make up the majority of the team making top-level organizational decisions. Pending approval from our board, we will shift \$5 million from our budget over the next year -- and more in the years to come -- to make long-overdue investments in our staff of color and our environmental and racial justice work.

I know that the steps I've outlined above are only the beginnings of what will be a years-long process to reckon with our history, regain trust from the communities we have harmed, and create a diverse and equitable Sierra Club for the 21st century.

### Serra statue put in storage

The statue of Father Serra in front of Ventura City Hall has been removed and is in storage pending a new home at the Ventura Mission.

"The Sierra Club has a long history of working closely with indigenous peoples across our nation and we have advocated for their rights," said Jim Hines, a Ventura resident, and Sierra Club member.

Padre Serra founded the Mission of San Buenaventura in 1782 which ultimately led to the founding of the city a 100 years later. The Padre used the Chumash to help construct the mission, farm the land, and provide domestic duties for missionaries and Spanish soldiers stationed in the area.

While the debate was intense, the local band of Chumash, Father Tom and the city council all agreed it was better to move it to the Mission grounds.

Just as the issue seemed over (after hours of 'till midnight testimony) a new group called "Coalition for Historical Integrity filed a lawsuit on July 21 on grounds the council had abused their discretion when it determined on July 15 that the statue was not a "historic landmark."

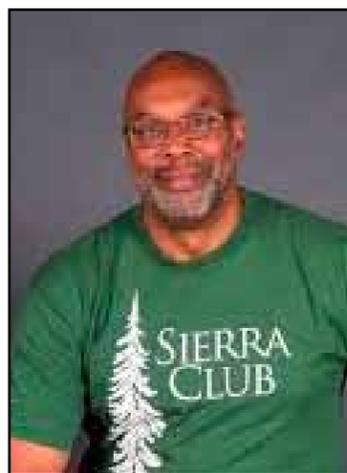


This year, Sierra Club members voted for Ramon Cruz of Puerto Rico to become the club's first Latinx president (above), following a female president, Loren Blackford (not the first); and previous to her was Aaron Mair, another first (self-described as 'Scottish African').

<https://tinyurl.com/RCruzOnCovid>

And here is a Q&A about his vision for the club's future:

<https://tinyurl.com/CruzQnA>



## Tax relief offered

Spread the love to the Los Padres Chapter this summer via the generous CARES Act Covid relief strategy.

In a nutshell, CARES Act allows you to make up to a \$300 per tax return donation to a qualified organization, and we qualify!

We are all in the fight against Covid-19 together, and while we had to suspend our popular outings program, our chapter leadership team and dedicated members and volunteers continue to advocate for environmental protection, justice, and change, while remaining dedicated stewards of our precious local wild spaces.

This is not an itemized deduction, but a reduction in your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI).

## Oil & cops don't mix

*Editor's note: This is a response by our chapter as a letter to Santa Maria Times report in early July.*

Oil and Cops Don't Mix

The Santa Barbara County Deputy Sheriff's Association, a police bargaining union, advocates for restarting Exxon offshore oil drilling with up to 70 dangerous tanker trucks a day on the 101. It seems odd that a police union would spend its time fighting for offshore oil drilling, especially since taxpayers - not ExxonMobil fund the County Sheriff's Department.

It's also odd that public safety officers would want to risk a repeat of the 2015 Refugio oil disaster or worse yet, expand oil tanker truck traffic on a main evacuation route for our region, threatening explosions, spills and forest fires - a serious threat to public health and safety. Support for oil corporations is not the only thing that is worrisome about the SBDSA. It's

"A visit to the Garden is one of the critical ways that we foster a love of the incredible flora of California and inspire guests to join us in its conservation," said Dr. Steve Windhager, Executive Director.

The Botanic Garden has partnered with Cottage Health to advise on measures that ensure the safety of Garden visitors (mandatory

So, if you donate up to \$300 in cash to the Los Padres Chapter, your AGI will be reduced by up to \$300 - and you can still claim the standard deduction. For more detail, go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/CARESdeduction>

Those who itemize deductions can't double-dip on this new feature, but if you are among the 95% of folks who take the standard deduction, you can donate up to \$300 to the Los Padres Chapter and extend your support in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

Of course you can always help out our chapter whether or not you can take advantage of the CARES relief through this link:

[www.SierraClub.org/donate/1000](http://www.SierraClub.org/donate/1000)

also how it approaches issues of race and ethnicity.

The Santa Barbara County Deputy Sheriff's Association displays a giant thin blue America flag on its Facebook page, a direct counter to the Black Lives Matter movement protesting the murder of Black people. It also participated in a blatantly anti-immigrant (specifically Mexican American demonizing) political ad in the year Trump got elected. Police unions and associations according to the *New York Times* are one of the major stumbling blocks to police reform.

Hurtful videos and images and full-throated support for dangerous oil drilling and trucking aren't the kinds of things you'd expect from a public employee bargaining union. We expect better.

~ Jonathan Ullman, Executive Director, Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter

## EVENTS

Aug 1-7: **SCAPE** art show and sale to benefit the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum. Southern California Artists Painting for the Environment also helps the Gaviota Coast Conservancy every year. Virtual event here:

<https://sbmm.org/20scape>

Aug 6: "**Musings and Sketches**" by John Muir's Grand Yosemite that includes the locations and quotes. Yosemite Conservation Heritage Center is sponsoring this free webinar at 7pm. You must register at:

<https://tinyurl.com/MuirMusings>

Aug 8: **Hidden Nature** with Dr. David White who will use microscopy and compost to demonstrate how microorganisms in soil to support healthy ecosystems. Free Zoom meeting at 10am, to register go to:

[www.venturalandtrust.org/events](http://www.venturalandtrust.org/events)

Aug 9: **Online Get Together** sponsored by the Ventura Sierra Club from 7-7:40pm. Group Chair Nina Danza will show you some fun and informative ways to stay active with the Ventura Sierra Club. For details and sign-up (required), go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/ActiveInfoOnZoom>

Sept 12: **Girls in Ocean Science** (GiOS) event aboard the Condor Express features female experts sharing their lives and careers with local high school students. Space limited to 50 students (scholarships available); to apply contact Lis at 456-8741 or:

[LPerry@SBmm.org](mailto:LPerry@SBmm.org)

Sept 17: **Wildlife Tracker** Mike Watling with Friends of the Island Fox will present "The Island Fox Tale" illuminating the unique mammal found only on the Santa Barbara Channel Islands. Free Zoom meeting at 7pm, to register go to:

[www.venturalandtrust.org/events](http://www.venturalandtrust.org/events)

## All physical meetings suspended - we're online

### Group News

The public is welcome to our programs

#### CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

~ Meets 4th Thursday 7pm of every month, via internet for now. Email Secretary Gerry Ching for the agenda: [gching@cox.net](mailto:gching@cox.net)  
~ Chapter website and blog at:

[www.SierraClub.org/LosPadres](http://www.SierraClub.org/LosPadres)

#### SANTA BARBARA GROUP

~ We meet 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesdays, noon to 1:30pm of each month. For details and to follow the South Coast area, contact:

[SantaBarbaraGroup@SierraClub.org](mailto:SantaBarbaraGroup@SierraClub.org)

<https://www.FACEBOOK.com/SBSierraclub>

<https://TWITTER.com/SBSierraClub>

<https://www.INSTAGRAM.com/SierraClubSantaBarbara>

<https://www.MEETUP.com/SierraClub-SantaBarbara>

<https://tinyurl.com/SBGroupBlog>

#### ARGUELLO GROUP

Our North County Group will keep you informed on our Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/SierraClubArguelloGroup](http://www.facebook.com/SierraClubArguelloGroup) ~Volunteers needed; your talents could make a difference. Call 350-0629 or:

[RebeccaAugust@mac.com](mailto:RebeccaAugust@mac.com)

#### VENTURA NETWORK

~ For board meeting dates, times and location email:

[sierraclubventura@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclubventura@gmail.com)

~ Get latest info about the western Ventura County group via Facebook and a blog:

<http://tinyurl.com/VenturaSierraClubFB>

<https://tinyurl.com/VenturaSierraClubBlog>

~New MEETUP site for hikes, outings etc:

[www.meetup.com/SierraClubVentura](http://www.meetup.com/SierraClubVentura)

#### CONEJO GROUP

~ Events, outings and meetings will be sent to you if you sign up at

[ConejoGroup@gmail.com](mailto:ConejoGroup@gmail.com)

Otherwise, get all information on this eastern Ventura County Group from Hugh Warren, 341-6295 [mail@hkwarren.net](mailto:mail@hkwarren.net)

[www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo](http://www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo)

[www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo/outings](http://www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo/outings)

**Electric Vehicles 101**

SAVING MONEY WHILE GOING GREEN WITH ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Community Environmental Council 50th Anniversary SIERRA CLUB electricdrive 805

Electric Vehicles 101 is a webinar that is still current and available at: [www.CECsb.org/ev-10](http://www.CECsb.org/ev-10)



Katie Davis and her family have driven electric cars for at least a decade, charged by solar panels and now a back-up battery. Her son has never driven a gasoline car – the future!

# 'I'll never buy a gas car again'

By Katie Davis

In honor of National Drive Electric week, I am hereby declaring I will never buy a gas car again. It's an easy call.

Having driven electric cars for a decade, I would not give up the quiet, fume-free driving experience, the convenience of charging at home, the freedom from gas stations and oil changes, and the peace of mind that comes from kicking the addiction to oil.

My family has gone through several different kinds of electric cars, and my whole extended family now drives only electric. My college-age son has never even driven a gas car.

It's getting easier and more affordable to go electric. Used electric cars are now an option, and new ones have longer range, with more public charging infrastructure, which opens up long-distance travel. California offers grants and generous rebates for lower income people. Utilities like SCE and PG&E offer additional rebates. The cost for electricity is much cheaper than gasoline.

The annual week is Sept 26-Oct 4, and the Sierra Club is a co-sponsor.

Here are some useful resources for choosing and driving an electric vehicle (EV):

**Electric Vehicles 101:** We recently partnered with the SB Community Environmental Council on a webinar overview and Q&A. You can watch the recording, view the slides, or join an EV Facebook group here: [www.cecsb.org/ev-10](http://www.cecsb.org/ev-10)

**New cars:** There are over 50 different EV options, whether your price range is \$20,000 or \$200,000. PG&E has a nice list showing costs and range: <https://ev.PGE.com/vehicles>

You can track the latest news on electric cars at: [www.GreenCarReports.com](http://www.GreenCarReports.com)

**Leased cars:** A good option given the continuous improvement in EVs. This site lists specific lease offers at dealerships, with many in the \$100-\$300 a month range. The rebates should help cover the upfront costs: <https://tinyurl.com/LeaseEVs>

**Used cars:** As an example, a used Nissan Leaf can be found for \$4000 - \$9000. Use the "advanced search" feature on Auto Trader, and select, fuel type "electric": [www.autotrader.com](http://www.autotrader.com)

**Rebates:** The federal tax credit is applied when you buy or lease an EV. You must apply for state and utility rebates which range from \$750-\$10,000 depending on eligibility. Be sure to research rebates whether you are buying new, used or leasing. You can practically get a free car. Electric Drive 805 has all the links: <https://tinyurl.com/Rebates4EV>

**Home Charging:** If you can park near an outlet, just plug in and charge an EV, best to do it overnight as costs are less and it's slow with a typical 110 outlet. It's faster if you can install a home charging station (240 outlet); they cost \$300-\$800 plus an electrician's time. Look into rebates for this too. <https://tinyurl.com/EVhomecharger>

**Public Charging:** Download the Plugshare.com app on your phone to find places to charge when you're on the road. Common chargers locally are via ChargePoint.com or EVgo.com; sign up for a free account and get a card for convenience. Cost for these is 1/4<sup>th</sup> to 1/3<sup>rd</sup> the cost of a gallon of gas for the same range.

Note that Tesla has its own network, which other brands can't tap into; however, there are adaptors for some non-Tesla models but not the Supercharger models.

Other links: Our EV Advocate, Kent Bullard, added a few more links nationwide. Dept. of Energy Alternative Fuel Data Center has a Station Locator that is not brand-specific, but is comprehensive: <https://tinyurl.com/WheresCharger>

Electrify America is a subsidiary of Volkswagen, established in 2016 by the automaker to offset emissions in the wake of the Volkswagen emissions scandal: [www.ElectrifyAmerica.com](http://www.ElectrifyAmerica.com)

Of course, driving less or not at all is the most sustainable option and we encourage biking, walking and public transportation (with a mask). If you must drive, by going electric you will help increase the demand and supply of EVs and help hasten our transition away from gas-guzzling, polluting vehicles... and influence those around you as well.

Lastly, if you make the switch and want to donate your old, used car to the Sierra Club, here's the link: <https://tinyurl.com/Donate2Club>

# Make Drive Electric Week last 12 months

The wildly enthusiastic and well-attended events showing off electric vehicles during September's National Drive Electric Week Sept 26 to Oct 4 will be modified this year to either static displays or webinars, no thanks to the Covid quarantine.

Typically, you'll see the Sierra Club and Santa Barbara Community Environmental Council conduct these events in downtown SB, Goleta, Solvang, Carpinteria, Ventura and Oxnard.

But as of press time, CEC's Mike Chiacos said the SB static

shows and a webinar are not yet finalized, but you can find details closer to Sept. 26 in newspapers, social media, and the link below.

It's a similar situation in Ventura County, noted our chapter's Transportation Director Kent Bullard.

"We are working on providing several alternative EV educational opportunities," he said. "One that's already been nailed down is on Friday, Oct. 2, from noon - 4pm at the Ventura County Government Center for a non-contact, social



distancing EV parking and learning opportunity." Details are here: <https://tinyurl.com/EVdisplayVentura>

Besides the Sierra Club and CEC, organizations that are working together include the Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance and Air Pollution Control District along with the umbrella organization for all details and educational materials here: [www.ElectricDrive805.org](http://www.ElectricDrive805.org)

# Lucky ol' sun sustains couple

For over 10 years, Kent and Cathy Bullard have used solar energy to enhance their sustainability, power their home, drive clean and conserve resources including their fiscal ones.

"Solar is a big component in my sustainable toolbox," he said, as he and Cathy sit in their home as their 4.2kW roof-mounted solar system generates electricity above them.

The couple installed the solar energy system while moving into their Ventura home in February 2010. Since then, it has generated an average of 20 kilowatts of electricity daily for a total generation of 82,021kW, which offset 139,436 pounds of carbon. The system provides 100% of the electricity used by the home and for charging their two electric vehicles. Recently, a battery was installed in their garage to capture as much sun power as possible for use when it's past dark-thirty.

The systems cost of \$29,026 was reduced by state rebates and income tax credits to an out of the pocket cost of \$11,872.

Simple payback would have been after 9.8 years. But calculating the offset of driving on sunshine rather than purchasing gasoline, system payback was reached in just 6.5 years and since then has saved the Bullard's over \$8,177. Kent and Cathy emphasize, though, that while solar systems offer excellent long-term savings, that's not the primary reason they chose to "go solar."

"We did it for broader reasons," says Kent, explaining his ongoing interest in and commitment to sustainability in all aspects of his life. Since retiring from a 30-year career working at Channel Islands National Park, Kent freely spends his time promoting sustainable practices, electric vehicles, alternative fuels, and conservation in addition to serving as this chapter's transportation chair.

He is an active member of the EV Advocates and is a key figure in helping to organize our popular EV shows in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, which can't happen this year

# Get Solar

The Community Environmental Council (CEC) is launching another Solarize Santa Barbara deal that is open until the end of October.

It's a community-led group purchasing program for solar and battery storage systems that reduces costs. Open to residents of Southern Santa Barbara County now through Oct. 31, the program is offered in partnership with the cities of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Carpinteria, and the County of Santa Barbara.

To take part in the program, homeowners should apply any time before Oct. 31 here: [www.SolarizeSB.org](http://www.SolarizeSB.org)

For a similar education specifically on batteries, Plug-In America is conducting a free webinar overview of EV batteries on Tuesday, Aug. 18 from 9-10:15am here: <https://tinyurl.com/BatteryWebinar>

due to the quarantine, but virtual and static displays are likely during the September

He and Cathy like that the solar panels are prominently positioned on the front of the house. The panels face west to take advantage of the afternoon sun in an area that frequently gets morning fog.

"Having the system visible is an important aspect. It's part of the statement."

"Install a solar system and drive on sunshine because it's the right thing to do."

To learn more tap into this local webinar: [www.electricdrive805.org/webinars](http://www.electricdrive805.org/webinars)



Kent Bullard proudly displaying his solar panels and his electric Tesla and hybrid Chevy in front of his Ventura home; not shown is a back-up battery in the garage. (Photo by Cathy Bullard)

# GOP ignoring graphs

By Jon Ullman

Recently, I saw a social media post from a friend lamenting that people weren't focusing on climate change because of Coronavirus.

There's no question climate has been put on the back burner. Hawaii's Mauna Loa observatory is currently reading 414 ppm of CO2 (350 ppm is considered 'safe'). The CO2 curve hasn't flattened, it's trending back up (see story pg 2).

Both climate change and viruses are environmental factors that affect our lives such as markets and jobs. Math and science allow us to graph the curves we need to flatten them.

But the problem is that Republicans aren't paying attention to the long-term relationships between the graphs. They are choosing to ignore the Coronavirus and climate change graphs because they are afraid of the impact on the financial markets. But as we've seen in the past two months, they do so at their own (and our) peril.

It was clear in May that the Coronavirus curve had not flattened but had just plateaued. Nevertheless, Trump and the GOP began a coordinated denial machine in May and June. America saw armed unmasked "liberty" protests, packed unmasked Trump rallies in Tulsa and Mt. Rushmore. Before the White House Coronavirus task force shut down, it produced a document instructing states to reach "gating" criteria, which most Republican governors ignored (and even some Democrats).

From the president not wearing and belittling masks, to waging a war on the nation's top epidemiologist Dr. Anthony Fauci,

to trying to open up schools in hotspots, there was (and still is) a coordinated war on science in an attempt to speed economic recovery before the November elections, another graph the President is watching.

There are as of this writing over *four million* Coronavirus cases and over 150,000 deaths in the U.S., far exceeding any other nation. Maybe Republicans are paying more attention, but it's largely too late.

Does all this sound familiar?

The Republican denial of Coronavirus perfectly mirrors their denial of climate change. But we've wasted decades with their denial and inaction.

We get it. They are afraid that flattening the Mauna Loa curve will flatten financial market curves too. And yes, there will be some losers like coal and petroleum, and maybe it will require us to buy less, be more efficient and travel less.

But there will be winners too, like solar and wind and batteries and anything that helps to reduce carbon. But unless we flatten the climate curve, we'll see widespread misery and death and ultimately a collapse of financial markets.

Many have fretted that Coronavirus has caused us to lose our focus on climate change. But if anything, it has taught us in a span of months what can go terribly wrong when nearly all Republican leaders ignore the graphs. When they do, the ICUs have filled up and people are dying, and millions get a debilitating disease. It's too late. Let's just hope it's not too late for climate. Because that is the curve that must be crushed at all costs.

# Biking is on a roll everywhere

During the quarantine, bike riding is flourishing, especially with great weather but also because indoor activities are limited these days.

Within the city of Ventura, it's up 70% in 2020 which is, from January to June, 241,000 bike trips of real-time counts of six street routes, said Derek Towers, the city's bicycle coordinator.

This follows a declaration that Ventura is a bicycle friendly city by PeopleForBikes.org with a rating of 3 out of 5 stars, a similar rating earned by Santa Barbara (room for improvement).

A rail to trail 'dream bike route' that would go from the Saticoy (east) side of Hwy 118 to Santa Paula has advanced with environmental analysis. "It's been a dream of bicyclists, runners and trail users for decades," noted Supervisor Steve

Bennett. Supported by the Sierra Club, among others, it would hook into the existing Santa Paula Branch Line trail within that city. On the downside, "it does not cross into Ventura much to the exasperation of everyone in Ventura so far," said Ventura Sierra Club Chair Nina Danza.

Nevertheless she and the club are strong proponents for that trail, among many others. To get involved, go to:

[SierraClubVentura@gmail.com](mailto:SierraClubVentura@gmail.com)

Tower said the push for better bike-friendly corridors allows for "less reliance on vehicles and less pollution for the climate and more livable communities."

The public is responding as "bike sales are through the roof," Towers said.

That's confirmed by bike shops where there's often a waiting line for

repairs. Notably, new sales of electric bikes "have taken off," said Robin Gardner of Dogleg (DoglegElectric.com) in Ventura, who said 50% of bikes now sold are electric. Gardner started Dogleg in his garage in Santa Barbara and besides its electric bike specialty, also deals in electric golf carts, mobility scooters and those used at resorts, such as the Chumash Casino and hotels.

Besides reducing emissions, bikes are fun and healthy, just ask Ventura City Council member Christy Weir, who's been posting her rides on Facebook with her husband Tim, exploring the region during the quarantine. Here's some of her favorites:

1. Ojai/Ventura Bike Trail, one of my favorite rides, nine miles that parallels the Ventura River. It is a well-paved, scenic bike path that follows the former railroad right-of-way. Views of the river and valleys and hills are awesome any time of year.

2. Emma Wood bike path is newly repaved and so close to the Pacific Ocean, you can hear the waves and smell the ocean air. I enjoy watching the windsurfers and gulls, and seeing waves crash along the uncrowded shore.

3. Canada Larga Road off Hwy 33 and the Ventura Avenue frontage is between Ventura and Casitas Springs. I enjoy the quiet country ride through rolling hills, with cattle grazing and a wide variety of birds

## SIGHTINGS

# Can't keep a good club down

By John Hankins

Well, we're getting used to Zoom meetings and webinar events during the quarantine, indicating our learning curve isn't flat ... in contrast to the rise of Covid and decline of national leadership.

Please join us; see Group News box on page 3 for contacts and links where you can get involved. While we are not now conducting our free outings (possibly reviving in September), we encourage all to go outside on your own. If you'd like to donate (it helps a lot and the money stays here at home), do not turn the page and forget, but go directly to: [www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000](http://www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000)

July 24: **Town Hall** meeting (virtual) by Sierra Club seeking input on this year's Presidential race; some of our chapter members took part.

July 23: "**Mathematical Illusion**" was the key phrase to counter Port of Hueneme's claim that expansion plans would not 'directly result' in increased pollution. Our Sierra Club Chapter agreed with CAUSE's written testimony to Oxnard planners, calling for increased environmental review of air, health, recreation, jobs and cultural impacts,

July 20: "**Urban stormwater** runoff is the single largest source of surface water pollution in Santa Barbara," said city planners, and so our SB Group wrote a letter urging them NOT to allow more industry exemptions; in fact, "if any changes are considered ... they should *strengthen* clean runoff requirements."

July 16: **Code Electric**: Sierra Club sent a letter and others testified to the Ventura County Planning Commission, supporting a code that would support electrifying new houses and buildings, reducing natural gas use.

July 5: **Native Plant Trail** viewing with participants wearing masks and standing 6' apart happened at the entry to the Fillmore Fish Hatchery, 612 E. Telegraph Rd. in Fillmore.



The ocean is a common destination along the Ventura bike path. Bikes ridden by Council member Christy Weir (and family and friends) are taking a break near Surfer's Point. She has been posting her Ventura local bike rides on Facebook for weeks. (Photo by Christy Weir)

and wildflowers. The road is narrow and winding, with no bike lane, but very little traffic leading to private ranches.

4. Ventura River for a pleasant city ride, includes the Promenade. Picturesque, with plenty of interesting sights. The safe bike path goes all the way from Surfer's Point through the State Beach to Pierpont and the Ventura Keys. The river estuary and Surfer's Point area is especially fun to explore with my family on sunny afternoons, watching for dolphins and blue heron and cormorants.

Want to learn more about the city of Ventura's master plan for alternative transportation? Go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/VCityBikePlan>

For Ventura County's bike master plan, go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/VCbikePlan>

Santa Barbara County Assn. of Governments also has a regional

bike plan at:

<https://tinyurl.com/SBCbikePlan>

The city of Santa Barbara has its own bike plan too:

<https://tinyurl.com/SBcityBikePlan>

~ By John Hankins

## SYV biking

The idea of connecting Buellton and Solvang via a multi-use trail is ready for your comments with an Aug. 14 deadline.

The public is being asked to comment on a "story map" interactive website, which would analyze various options at:

<http://arcg.is/0e8yGr>

Comments may also be sent to SB County Assn. of Governments, Attn: Jared Carvalho by phone (805) 961-8900 or email:

[jcarvalho@sbcag.org](mailto:jcarvalho@sbcag.org)



The Ventura bike path along Emma Wood State Beach (left) leads into the Rincon bike path and onto Montecito and beyond! (Photos by Christy Weir and Jon Ullman)

## Thanks to our sustaining members

Support the Sierra Club's Los Padres Chapter by joining the Sustaining Member Circle, like your neighbors did below. All it takes is pledging \$20 a month or more to support our local chapter.

Contributors to the Sustaining Member Circle receive advance notice of events, regular updates on local environmental advocacy, a subscription to *Condor Call*, an invitation to an exclusive annual outing, and a gift.

By joining, you are directly supporting the local work our chapter is doing on the ground in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The steady flow of income provided by the Circle keeps the chapter's focus on this advocacy, outreach, and growth because we know our monthly expenses will be covered by your recurring contributions.

It's easy to join, just select "**MAKE MY GIFT MONTHLY**" at \$20 or more per month here:

[www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000](http://www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000)

Once you complete your payment, you automatically join the very special Sustaining Member Circle, and more information will be sent to you by email.

We need at least 50 new members in the second quarter of 2020 in order to sustain our critical environmental advocacy. Every dollar you donate stays here in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties to help us transition away from fossil fuels and to protect rivers, forests, and wildlife that depend on us.

Read about our success in every issue of *Condor Call*!

Please feel free to contact Emily Engel with any questions: [emilyaengel@gmail.com](mailto:emilyaengel@gmail.com)

## Thank you to our latest list of Sustaining Member in the Circle:

Irene Cooke  
Frances Shannon Marsh  
Michael Shapiro  
Rachel Pratt  
Susan Chapin  
Warren Freeman  
Ms Margaret Peck  
Alex Greenlee  
Christopher Tull  
Constance Ford  
Madeleine Ignon  
Julie Young  
L Washburn and Sharon Keigher  
Robert Wishart  
Christine Boesch  
Richard and Nina Hunt  
Karen Kaminsky  
Peter Stricker  
Tamara Teitelbaum  
Ms Elizabeth A Roscoe  
Melissa Baffa  
Paul Taylor  
Laura Lindsay  
G. Clint & B. Leighton  
Rachel Altman

James Taylor  
Katie Davis & Albert Oaten  
B Fiedel & A Dusenberry  
Lena Casimano  
Deborah Kiffe  
Sharon Bushman  
Patrick Stevens  
Chichoqsh Pagaling  
Alex and June Pujó  
Margaret & Joseph Connell  
Alyssa Moffitt  
Ken Hough & Jeanne Sparks  
Paula Markgraf  
Lucy Nichols  
Michael Aling  
M & Mrs C T Hoskinson  
Linda Lee  
Louis Vigorita  
Emily Engel  
Dr A & L Stewart-Oaten  
Bill & Liz Tallakson  
Robert Stokes  
Moya Brennan  
Catherine Mullin



New rooftop cabins under construction at the Yak Hotel, along the Manaslu Trek, Nepal, an "expanding penthouse lodging." Many of the club's national and international "Outings with a Cause" are on hold, but check the website: [www.SierraClub.org/outings](http://www.SierraClub.org/outings) (© Photo by Steven Veit, intrepid hike leader. Check out his website at: [www.StevenVeit.com](http://www.StevenVeit.com))



# Take a Hike!

## LOS PADRES CHAPTER

UPDATES: <https://www.sierraclub.org/lospadres>

Panorama above Goleta by Robert Bernstein

### Club outings

#### Sierra Club Local Outings

All Sierra Club local outings have been cancelled until further notice; domestic trips via the National Sierra Club have been cancelled until at least Oct. 1. Check the Los Padres Chapter website for updates to this policy at:

[www.SierraClub.org/LosPadres](http://www.SierraClub.org/LosPadres)

#### Recreation Area Re-opens

Many of the campgrounds, day use areas and trailheads in the Lower Santa Ynez Recreation area of the Los Padres National Forest have been difficult to get to since the first crossing was closed due to high water levels. It is now open, and

the campgrounds that were closed are open now (except for group campsites). These developed areas are subject to a user fee, but if you are not using a developed area, a fee cannot be collected. A new sign posted at the first kiosk makes this clear, but you must use an existing roadside turn-out and be completely off the pavement.

#### Please Be Safe

Please observe social spacing. And if an area is too crowded, pick another. And be careful with fire.

#### Day Use Fees

Day use fees are not required for roadside parking outside of developed campgrounds or day use areas.



Backcountry trails don't just happen. They are built with loving care and maintained primarily by volunteers. Here's one difficult repair along Devil's Slide on the Sisquoc Trail by Los Padres Forest Association crew. More funds are needed. We hope you can contribute here: <https://lpforest.org/sespe-wilderness-campaign>

### Some camps reopen

All campgrounds in the Los Padres National Forest are open *except* for group campgrounds, if reserved ask for refunds here:

[www.Recreation.gov](http://www.Recreation.gov)

Recreational shooting in all areas has been suspended until Dec. 31 due to dangerous fire conditions.

While the Service has been renewing the closure orders every two

weeks, it gets complicated due to some developed campgrounds are managed by Parks Management Co. while the National Forest manage others.

Local note: Closure extended until Sept 30 for the Punch Bowls in area of Santa Paula Canyon due to overflows

Before you go into the forest, check the alerts and closures (you may also subscribe to them) here

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/lpnf/alerts-notices>

**CONDITIONS**  
Campgrounds trails and roads in Los Padres National Forest can be closed, have restrictions due to habitat protection, repair or weather. Before you go into the backcountry ensure you check conditions with rangers. Numbers to call (805 area unless noted) are:

**Los Padres Forest Districts**

Headquarters	968-6640
Ojai-Ventura	646-4348
Mt Pinos	(661) 245-3731
Santa Barbara	967-3481
Santa Lucia	925-9538

**Other Areas**

Santa Monica Mtns	370-2301
Conejo Park	381-2737
Simi Valley	584-4400
Montecito	969-3514

**Forest Information**  
For updated info, maps, news releases, and other goodies:  
<http://FS.USDA.gov/LPNE>

**Regional Hike Info**  
Lots of local info on websites that give you varied info on outings, trail profiles, wildflower alerts, work opportunities and much more.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/lospadres>  
[www.LPForest.org](http://www.LPForest.org)  
<https://LPFW.org>  
[www.HikeLosPadres.com](http://www.HikeLosPadres.com)  
[www.SBSierraClub.org](http://www.SBSierraClub.org)  
[www.SantaBarbaraTrailGuide.com](http://www.SantaBarbaraTrailGuide.com)  
[www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com](http://www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com)  
<https://SBTrails.org>  
[www.VenturaCountyTrails.org](http://www.VenturaCountyTrails.org)  
<http://Hikes.VenturaCountyStar.com>

### STRESSED OUT?

## Celebrate 'soul quenching wins'

By Carla Bollinger

The world is suffering great stress, loss of life and economic resources caused by the Coronavirus.

We are living through climate change disasters, political discourse, human rights' strife, loss of resources to support growing over-population, and shrinking open space that is threatening survival of wildlife, biodiversity, and quality of life for humans.

We all need some soul quenching "WINS". Here's a list that affects our local area:

~ Rim of the Valley Preservation Act would add 191,000 acres annexed to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area as a wildlife open space/corridor through the Simi Hills and into Los Angeles areas. It is now up for passage as part of the Protecting America's Wilderness Act (see story pg 1).

~ Birth of three cougar kittens in the Santa Monica Mountains, discovered by Nat'l Park Service Ranger/Biologist Jeff Sikich, who believes they are candidates to mate with others. The two males and one female were last detected in the Santa Monica Mountains region, alive and well, and were ear tagged. Roaring good news!

Cal Fish and Wildlife voted to give mountain lions a temporary protective status because of the threats to their population decline caused by human encroachment, developments into wildlife habitat, human killings, vehicle deaths, hazardous rodenticide poisoning. Final status is pending due to research studies. There will be public input.

~ A red-tailed hawk poisoned by rodenticide was saved via an experimental blood transfusion at the CA Wildlife Center by veterinarian Stephany Lewis and her team. Luckily, the CWC had a recovering female red-tailed hawk used as a donor.

~ Hidden Creeks Estates (188

## Initial win on oil EIR

Step one to a cleaner Ventura County regarding new oil wells.

So said John Brooks of CFROG (Climate First Replacing Oil and Gas) who noted that on July 30, the Ventura County Planning Commission supported modern requirements for all proposed new oil wells on a 4-1 vote.

The vote is a recommendation to update to the County's oil drilling ordinances so that any new wells under antiquated permits will be subject to greater transparency and environmental review.

The oil industry threatens a lawsuit claiming this takes away its rights but as you can hear in comments from CFROG attorney Kevin Bundy that it does not; hear it on this video:

[https://youtu.be/s\\_SxwN0KJz0](https://youtu.be/s_SxwN0KJz0)

"Many thanks to all who sent emails and our partners at Climate HUB and Los Padres ForestWatch," Brooks said. The Sierra Club supports this too but was not actively involved except for members who testified.

Next stop is the VC Board of Supervisors which must pass the ordinances, which is not yet scheduled.

luxury homes) became Hidden Creek Parkland, 257-acres, in the Santa Susana Mountains.

The battle since 2007 was a major win for many, as it helped save over 400 coast live oak, black walnut trees, a rare black cottonwood woodland, and considerably more native plants-trees and wildlife habitat at the confluence of Mormon and Browns Creeks, tributary to the L.A. River.

The Angeles and San Fernando Valley Sierra Club chapters were major players in the fight that culminated in the Mountains Recreational Conservation Association acquiring this land with connection to the Antonovich Regional Park at Joughlin Ranch, 2,360-acres.

Each strategic open space land parcel saved in both Los Angeles and Ventura counties contribute to the survival of our SoCal wildlife.

~ Ventura County Wildlife Overlay Ordinance Zone (WOZO) ordinance was passed by county supervisors last year, providing habitat connections and wildlife movement corridors from the Santa Monica Mountains to the Los Padres National Forest, and east to the Simi Hills.

~ Editor's note: Carla is a Sierra Club Member and Public Land Alliance Network/PLAN Director. To learn more, email: [planopenspace@gmail.com](mailto:planopenspace@gmail.com)

## Travel Ventura River on a drone adventure

Have any Ventura residents gone up or down the Ventura River between the ocean and upper Ojai watershed?

A fascinating drone trip will take you there, seeing the river from a flight path "as the crow flies."

The "Ways of Water" is an hour long video filmed and edited by CFROG adviser Jimmy Young of Ventura as a gift to water protectors and now available to local groups which have mission statements that include the protection and management of our local waters and native species of flora and fauna. That would include Sierra Club, Ventura Land Trust, Patagonia, Surfrider and ChannelKeeper, among many others.

Now in draft form, the video provides an incredible birds eye view of the Ventura River system from Matilija Creek to the Pacific Ocean. You will see from above the Matilija Dam, Ojai Quarry, the Robles Dam and diversion canal, the former USA Petrochem oil refinery property, the

river mouth, estuary and more.

CFROG (Climate First Replacing Oil and Gas) and the producer hope the video piece will aid in the promotion of the Matilija Dam removal, creation of the Ventura River Parkway, green uses of the PetroChem property and restoration of the entire riparian system. If groups identify footage they want to use to promote their vision, they must contact the producer at:

[MLperspectives@gmx.com](mailto:MLperspectives@gmx.com)

All footage was obtained with an FAA registered drone. Young practices environmentally responsible methods and follows the North American Nature Photography Association "Principles of Ethical Field Practices". Young is the owner of McConnell's Fine Ice Creams of Ventura and is on CFROG's advisory board.

Here is the link to "Ways of Water"

<https://tinyurl.com/WaysOfWater>



The Ventura River Near Shell Road, see it as the crow flies! (Photo courtesy of Friends of the Ventura River)

## Local lands website

There has never been a more important and positive time to get out and explore our remarkable federal, state, county, and city public lands.

A new website: "50 Great Public Lands Destinations – Santa Barbara and Beyond" launched in late July to help everyone discover new and wonderful places and adventures, all within 300 miles of the Sierra Club's Los Padres Chapter area.

"While teaching the Public Lands class at UCSB, I learned that a lot of my students from throughout the state and nation did not know about the tremendous public land

opportunities all around us," notes Deborah Williams, the author of the website at:

<https://50greatpubliclanddestinations.org>

Williams is a Lecturer in the Environmental Studies Department at UCSB and specializes in Public Lands.

"We are the owners of our public parks, beaches, forests and open spaces. Enjoying these extraordinary areas is very important to our physical and mental health, our sense of community, and our happiness," especially during the pandemic, she said.

**WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?**

Ensure your environmental legacy by naming Sierra Club or your favorite Sierra Club Chapter in your will or trust. These gifts cost you nothing now. You can hold on to your assets for as long as you need them and you can change your beneficiaries at any time.

*If you have named Sierra Club or your Chapter as a beneficiary or would like to discuss doing so, please contact us today*

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# Presence of history

Greetings Friends:

Growing up on the historic Spanish land grant which made up Rancho Santa Ana was an unbelievable experience for me. Riding horses over the land, helping to work the land, reaching my maturity on this land, forever I hold the land close to me.

Native American villages were erected on the land, Joaquin Murrieta (Mexican bandit) camped there, Depression era farmers plowed the ground, the stage carried travelers through it, a large lake (Lake Casitas) flooded a portion, and Johnny Cash sang on the land ... just a few examples of its rich, rich history.

And decades later I walked through this land, humbled by the history. My childhood home, my family's ranch, my ancestor's roots are deep.



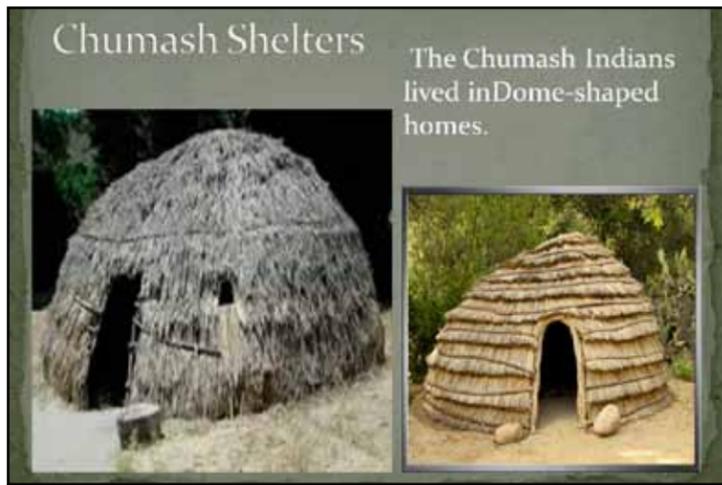
I was so delighted but maybe stupid, for the big cat could have easily jumped down on us, but she sensed the gentleness of our walk.

I swam in the creeks that bordered our ranch, Santa Ana Creek to the east and Coyote Creek to the west. I walked on the nearby ridges, Laguna Ridge to the south and Superior Ridge to the north. And towering over it all was the 5000-foot White Ledge Peak, which I viewed out my bedroom window each morning I woke up, my sacred mountain.

I still visit the site of my childhood home on a hill known as The Pine Grove, which my dad planted, flashbacks to a younger time. I feel close to my father who is buried there, and I feel, I see, I hear, I touch all which is important to me on this land.

When I walk across the land, can the past see me, can the past hear me, can the past feel me?

I feel the presence of all that



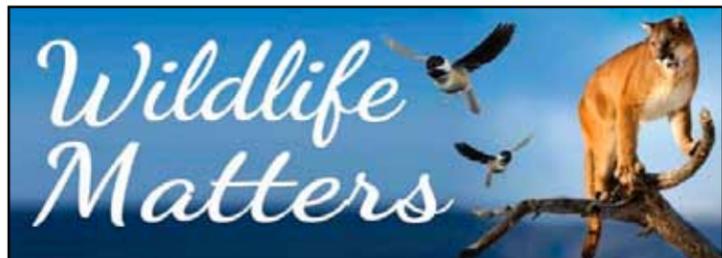
Rendering of a Chumash village in our area.

My first encounter with a mountain lion was on this ancient land, while walking with my wolf-dog Silver Dawn. She suddenly stopped and started barking loudly, looking up at the small hill above and what did my eyes see, a mountain lion looking down at us. I loved every minute that my eyes glazed at the majestic cat, marveling at her beauty, then like magic she was off in a flash to the underbrush.

has gone before me, my memories are overwhelmed when I now visit, my father was born on this land and buried on this land. The souls and spirits of those who have come and gone fill me with a rich legacy.

The strength of the spirit of those who came before me gives me strength today.

I walk in the presence of history; I am the land.  
~ for the wild, Jim



By Jim Hines

A large shadow soars over the wild land ... condor in flight but may fly no more ... program to protect endangered California Condors may be cancelled.

A humpback whale dives below the surface of the Pacific Ocean ... never to be seen again ... victim of nylon longline drift net.

A mountain lion feasts on a dead rat ... only to die from eating it ... rodenticide poisoning.

A gray wolf limps ... leg caught in a trap.

A river no more in the Rocky Mountain wilderness ... a dam proposal

A pristine wild landscape in southern Utah trampled ... unregulated fracking operations.

A pristine national marine

sanctuary ... in the bullseye for elimination.

This is what will be on my agenda for meetings I have with various elected and appointed officials during the upcoming week (during this time all meetings are done safely and remotely).

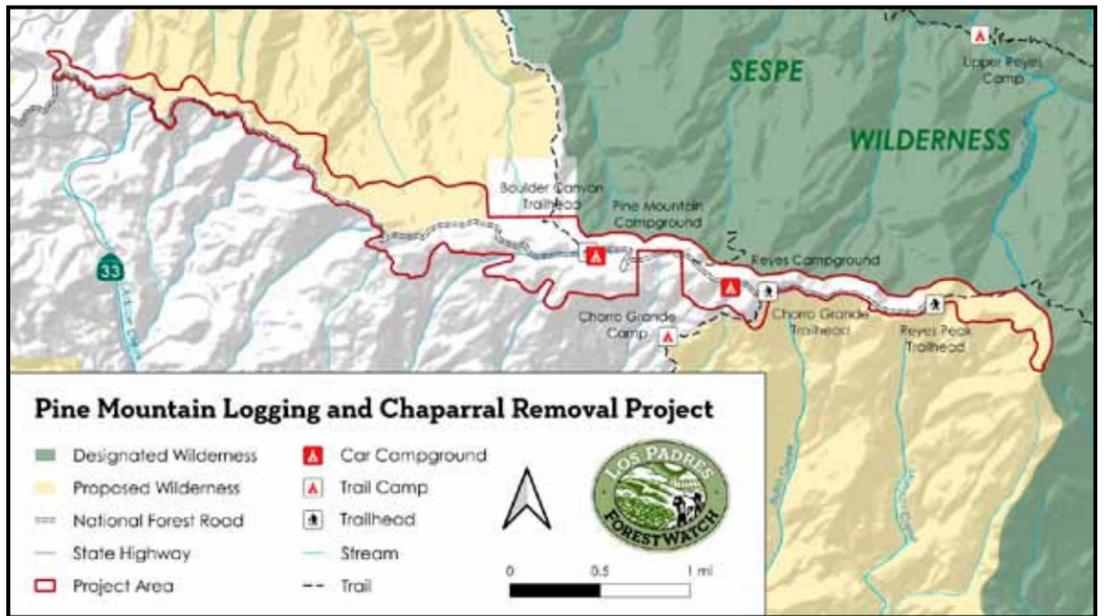
We cannot, we should not allow the rapid destruction of all which is wild ... for the wild is not only our heritage but our hope for the future.

Will the large shadow continue to soar over the wild land in the future? Learn how you can help here:

[www.sierraclub.org/explore-issue](http://www.sierraclub.org/explore-issue)

Meanwhile, check out this short YouTube video by Defenders of Wildlife:

<https://tinyurl.com/ESAattack>



## DEADLINE AUG 14

# Save a 'biodiversity hotspot'

On the provocative threat to cut down old-growth trees and chaparral across 755 acres deep in the Ventura County backcountry, the Forest Service extended the public comment deadline to August 14

The move happened thanks to our Rep. Salud Carbajal asking for the extension to Los Padres National Forest Supervisor Kevin Elliott. Carbajal introduced the legislation earlier this year that would protect portions of the project area under the Wilderness Act and he also asked that an environmental assessment be conducted.

"The purpose of the Reyes Peak Forest Health and Fuels Reduction Project is to improve wildlife habitat and forest health by thinning surface and ladder fuels, to reduce potential fire intensities and create landscapes more resilient to the impacts of drought, insects and disease, and wildfire in an area at risk for substantial tree mortality," according to the Forest Service.

Los Padres ForestWatch, the Sierra Club and many others oppose the plan arguing "the ridge is a remarkable biodiversity hotspot ... It would allow the logging of centuries-old trees, up to five feet in diameter, and the clearance of rare old-growth chaparral along six

miles of the prominent ridge known as Pine Mountain stretching from Highway 33 to Reyes Peak."

Hearing of the project, Sierra Club member Carla Bollinger and her husband "decided to visit Pine Mountain before preparing the public comment letter. It was an adventure to escape 'living' in my home office-work space," Carla is also the Director of PLAN, the Public Land Alliance Network.

"We drove State Route 33 north (Ojai Hwy), continued north (Maricopa Hwy) to our getaway and high-oxygen, wonderland visit. The Matilija poppies were in bloom, translucent dancers decorating the passageway. On the way back we

### EAVESDROPS

"Condors were consistently seen throughout the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks until the late 1970s." Now they are BACK!

~ Tyler Coleman, wildlife biologist at the parks, and the Santa Barbara Zoo tracked their movements, seeing four of the birds' signals around the Giant Forest, noted Dave Meyer, zoo condor biologist.

# Wheeler Gorge reopens

Los Padres Forest Association is looking for knowledgeable volunteers who might be interested in helping share information with forest-visitors at Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center on either Saturdays or Sundays.

We've reopened the Visitor Center on weekends from 9am - 3pm and have easy-ups setup outside to greet visitors and try to get them the

answers they need. We are following strict Ventura County Covid procedures with volunteers outside wearing masks and assisting people from 6 feet away.

Most of the questions are about hiking or camping and it's a lot of fun talking trails and campgrounds. If anyone is interested in coming out to help, please email us at:

[Volunteer@LPForest.org](mailto:Volunteer@LPForest.org)



stopped at the Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center with a meticulously informative wildlife/birds/nature display. Take the drive, stop on the turnouts, inhale and take photos," she advised.

To read the project proposal and submit a comment, visit the project webpage and these other links:

<https://tinyurl.com/ReyesTreeCuts>

From ForestWatch:

[www.LPFW.org/pine](http://www.LPFW.org/pine)

Watch ForestWatch's webinar on this project:

<https://tinyurl.com/PineMtWebinar>

# Land Trust's Zoom events

Ventura Land Trust's Environmental Speaker Series resumes this month online via Zoom. The series highlights leading voices in conservation, environmental science, and sustainability with free public events.

The first event, "Hidden Nature: How Microorganisms Restore the Land" features Dr. David White, director of the Center for Regenerative Agriculture. He will use microscopy and compost to show how microorganisms transform dead plant matter into healthy soil and draw parallels between the garden and large-scale land restoration. It starts at 10am, Saturday, Aug. 8.

Next up at 7pm Thursday, Sept. 17 is "The Island Fox Tale" with wildlife tracker Mike Watling and Friends of the Island Fox. They illuminate what distinguishes the iconic island fox, a creature found only in the Channel Islands ecosystem, from mainland foxes.

Register here to get the Zoom link to both:

[www.venturlandtrust.org/events](http://www.venturlandtrust.org/events)



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# More than a hiking club

By Kathryn Phillips, Director  
Sierra Club California

A friend who worked for a local chapter of the Sierra Club about 35 years ago tells a story that illustrates one of the challenges of change.

As the story goes, my friend heard a volunteer say loudly into the phone: “Conservation? We don’t do conservation ...We are a hiking club!”

This is so Sierra Club in that there are so many different interpretations of what we are, even among our members.

Since the Club’s founding in 1892, members have joined for the hikes and backpacking trips, and members who join to make a difference for the environment, and some want to do both.

What has changed over time is that making a difference for the environment has expanded as the world has changed.

In its earliest days, the Club’s founders were all about getting people into the Sierra Nevada to build a constituency for protecting that magnificent Range of Light. Later, members moved into actively lobbying to protect important natural areas.

In the last three decades, Sierra Club volunteers and staff have broadly expanded the sorts of environmental issues that we’ve focused on, especially in California.

Here we still work to preserve forests, deserts, and coastal areas, but we’ve increasingly added in work about toxics, air pollution, water pollution and climate change.

We advocate for electric vehicles and renewable energy alongside our push for healthy soils and sustainable stream flows.

In the last five years — and especially since the inauguration of the most divisive president in U.S. history — Sierra Club has incorporated into our agenda support for policies that recognize the systemic inequities that prevent people from fully participating in civic engagement.

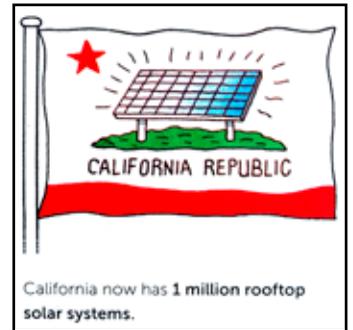
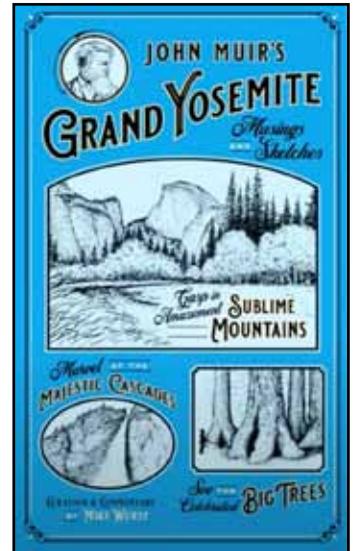
We have supported policies that protect Dreamers, provide sanctuary for undocumented immigrants, ensure health access, and protect workers from toxics exposure and other unhealthy and unjust work conditions. We have supported raising the minimum wage and lowering the number of big corporations that escape paying their fair share in taxes.

In 2020, we supported eight bills identified by the California Legislative Black Caucus as needed to help end systemic racism in California. One of those bills, Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5, flew through the legislature and will allow voters in November to roll back restrictions on affirmative action put in place in 1996.

But I do occasionally get emails from members who feel we’ve strayed too far from our original purpose: protecting the wildlands. I also have received an email from a member or two who is just fed up with our activities to help dismantle systemic inequities.

So why have we expanded the types of policies that demand our environmental organization’s support?

We don’t just explore, enjoy and protect the outdoors. We live in



## Yosemite programs online

The Sierra Club’s Yosemite Conservation Center is offering virtual programs beginning Aug. 6.

The topics will include John Muir, Yosemite Photography and Landmarks, Yosemite’s Night Sky, and more. The programs will be presented by some of the regular summer presenters, who are unable to offer live-programs this year since the building is shut down due to Covid-19.

Learn more and register for these programs here:

<https://tinyurl.com/VirtualYosemite>

The first of the summer programs is Aug.6 at 7pm: “Yosemite Through John Muir’s Drawings.”

You’ll meet Mike Wurtz from the University of the Pacific and his new book “John Muir’s Grand Yosemite: Musings and Sketches,” which features locations where Muir made his drawings, pairing them with quotes and information. University of the Pacific is the Home of the John Muir Papers.

the world.

Lately, we have been reawakened to the level of cruelty and bigotry targeted at Black Americans. It’s forced us to look inside ourselves and to change what we do to address the moment.

We haven’t given up on protecting the outdoors. But if the world is set up so that Black people are prevented from birdwatching, or murdered by a policeman over a \$20 bill, there’s something deeply wrong with that world. Black Lives Matter.

As a large grassroots organization with the power to alert and influence, we have a responsibility to expand our policy portfolio, to change again, to evolve.

We are more than just a hiking club.