

Vol. 20, No. 5 of 6

October - November 2020

Condor Call

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



© Photo by Suzanne Tanaka

Solar + battery...Eco-wins...Comeback Condors...WBC hiatus...Heat beats

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Grab some sun energy with CEC's Solarize Ventura campaign (see adjacent story)

SB asserts bold goal on carbon

The Santa Barbara City Council unanimously passed one of the most ambitious climate goals in the nation: Carbon Neutrality by 2035 at its Sept. 29 meeting.

The city council received dozens of letters of support and live public comments in support of the aspirational goal from the Sierra Club, Community Environmental Council, Clean Coalition and American Institute of Architects. The meeting ran late into the evening.

This bold goal is for the entire community, not just City operations, and will put the City on track to develop one of the most visionary Climate Action Plans in the country by:

~ Building on the City's commitment to 100% renewable energy by 2030,

~ Making more strides on zero emission transportation and buildings,

~ Developing policies to sequester remaining carbon in our region's working lands,

~ Energizing climate resilience efforts,

With climate crisis impacts compounding more rapidly than expected, we have no time to waste. We must redouble our efforts and continue the Central Coast's climate leadership.

~ Katie Davis



Central Coast Community Energy will be rolling out in Santa Barbara County in 2021. Take this survey (in English and Spanish) to let them know your priorities about what kinds of electricity programs and subsidies you would like to see:

<https://tinyurl.com/3CEprograms>



EAVESDROPS

"The wilderness is restorative for the soul ... it is the opposite of twitter ... it reminds us of forces and values larger than ourselves."

~ Nicholas Kristof, in a NY Times OpEd, after a family hiking trip on the Pacific Northwest Trail (nation's newest, established in 2009). He concludes "to let the wild spaces inspire our efforts in this election cycle by underscoring what is at stake not only in the next four years but also over the next four millennia."



Big push for solar and battery

By Katie Davis

Sierra Club has partnered with Swell Energy to offer solar and home battery solutions to Santa Barbara and Ventura county residents, and to create a clean, "virtual power plant" alternative to a polluting gas power plant.

A live "Solar + Battery" event was held on Sept. 24 to educate participants and take their questions. For those who couldn't make it, the webinar is available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/SolarBatteryWebinar>

Meanwhile, here are some common questions about home battery storage.

Q. What are the benefits of installing home solar plus battery?

A. Solar paired with battery

COVER PHOTO

The old Thorn Point fire lookout, about four miles from the trailhead in Ojai. Trail is rated moderate, with spectacular views even to the Channel Islands and wildflowers. Suzanne Tanaka of our Wilderness Basics Course took this image during one of her adventures.



Here's one of the best reasons to leave a legacy gift for the future generations, a future generation! This young girl was on a Red Rocks hike sponsored by the Sierra Club. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)

Gift that keeps giving

What do you want your legacy to be?

Ours is to protect the planet starting from our own chapter area of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, where we live and/or work.

This is a legacy that you are already part of as a member or friend. Many of you have supported our Chapter over the years either through volunteer efforts like clean-ups or graffiti removal, taking part in our outings, participating in rallies, writing letters on important decisions, contributing to issues to cover our costs, giving a general donation or simply being a member, whose dues are our foundation.

Whether or not you know it, your generosity has helped thousands of people explore, enjoy, and protect Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, and made it a part of your life. Now, we hope you will consider making the Los Padres Chapter part of your personal legacy or those of your loved ones, to honor a memory of someone

storage can eliminate your electric bill and shift energy use to non-peak hours. Plus, you get power during outages and shut offs.

SEE PHOTO ON PAGE 2

Q. What if I already have solar? Can I add a battery? What if I need both?

A. Yes, you can pair a battery with existing solar panels. You may want to add a battery so you can use your solar power if there is an outage or power shutoff. If your solar doesn't eliminate electricity costs, adding a battery can let you run off stored energy during peak expensive hours of the day, eliminating utility costs without adding more solar panels.

Q. What does it cost? How long until I get a return on investment?

A. Cost and pay back will vary depending on the size of your system, incentives, and utility costs. There is an extra \$1000 special incentive in SCE territory. There may be greater utility savings for PG&E customers. There are high fire hazard zone and medical rebates.

Community choice programs such as Clean Power Alliance and Monterey Clean Energy (coming to Santa Barbara County in 2021) offer more generous rates to solar customers. Click here to get a quote: www.SwellEnergy.com/SierraClub

Q. What kind of battery is it? Who will do the installation? Do I need a permit?

A. There are a variety of battery options available. Swell Energy uses the Tesla Powerwall. One benefit of Tesla is the regular software updates and user-friendly app for monitoring your system. Swell uses a network of local installers, and they guarantee a certain amount of incentive rebate and do all the work of applying for it for you, seeking permits and shepherding the project along.

Q. What do you mean by a "virtual power plant"?

A. Our community resisted plans to build yet another power plant on the beach in Oxnard, demanding that renewable energy alternatives be considered. We succeeded, and SCE chose a 195MW battery portfolio in place of the Puente gas plant. In addition, to large commercial battery storage, a network of thousands of home batteries will meet the need. Read "How a California community succeeded in pushing for a reliability fix that will see the installation of storage projects rather than a natural-gas peaker plant."

<https://tinyurl.com/SCEfix>

Setbacks for Ventura oil

Editor's note: For the full story with links to studies, go to: www.sierraclub.org/los-padres

By Jonathan Ullman

Director, Los Padres Chapter

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 in September to require oil wells be set back 1500-feet from homes and 2500-feet from schools.

The new County General Plan -- supported by Supervisors Bennett, Parks and Zaragoza -- will also consider 2500-foot setbacks for all sensitive land sites by 2022 as a future potential amendment. The plan also calls for the Ventura County building code be changed to favor all-electric new construction over fracked gas.

More than 100 Ventura County members and supporters of the Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter wrote to the Board. We joined allies Food and Water Action, Climate First: Replacing Oil & Gas (CFROG) and the Last Chance Alliance in the fight.

The Board's deciding factors were our health and environment. It has long been known that living within 2,500 feet of an oil well was dangerous to our communities, especially our children, mothers, and seniors. Oil and gas wells expose neighboring communities to dozens of known carcinogens and endocrine disruptors like benzene, formaldehyde, and hydrogen sulfide, in addition to particulate matter.

These chemicals and emissions

Club honors icon RBG



Editor's note: Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed away on Sept. 18 after numerous battles from cancer, yet she still was an active member of the Supreme Court to the end; following is a statement by Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune:

"As we mourn the loss of Justice Ginsburg, we should reflect on her words that 'Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time.'

"Those of us who strive to make change for good in this world -- whether it be fighting for racial justice, reproductive rights, or for a livable future -- must continue the fight in her honor. With her wisdom and her commitment to equal rights under the law, Justice Ginsburg helped make real, enduring change for millions so often cast into the shadows.

"Justice Ginsburg's legacy cannot be easily captured; the inspiration she provided, the equality she fought for, and the justice she delivered for millions will -- and must -- forever be preserved."

have proven records of toxicity and are known to cause health problems ranging from nosebleeds to chronic headaches, increased risks of respiratory illnesses, cancer and premature death. Two recent studies released by the University of CA and Stanford University experts confirmed that living near oil wells also has significant adverse effects on pregnant mothers and newborn babies in California.

In Ventura County, more than 8,000 residents live within 2,500 feet of an oil well, of which 60% are Latinx.

In order to keep oil workers fully employed, the County has established a retraining program to transition to clean energy work. Last year, California had five times as many clean energy jobs than fossil fuel jobs.

In addition to the oil setbacks, Ventura's adopted General Plan

continued on page 2

EAVESDROPS

"He had a nice day at the spa, with the pool, the shady, cool tile area to sleep in and figs to eat. The only thing he didn't get was a massage, but I wasn't going to do that."

~ Jodi Martin, east end homeowner in Ojai about the 450-pound black bear who spent a day and night on her back patio. Check out the story and video here:

<https://tinyurl.com/BearsVacation>

ENERGY RAP

Wins come from challenging oil

By Katie Davis

VENTURA WINS

During another record-breaking, climate-fueled fire season in California, Ventura County took action to reign in emissions. On Sept. 15 the supervisors adopted one of the most health-protective oil well setback laws in the nation, 2500' feet from schools and 1500' feet from homes, with a study to increase home setback to 2500' as well.

The board also banned flaring gas and trucking oil – a source of diesel emissions and a severe road hazard for other drivers. Oil companies must now use renewable energy to the extent feasible to power oil production.

The new plan also includes a building electrification code for all new buildings starting in 2023 which will reduce indoor air pollution, lower costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions ... and they created a Climate Emergency Council to develop additional programs for Ventura County.

SANTA BARBARA WINS

Given the hundreds of new oil wells proposed in Cat Canyon, ExxonMobil's plans to restart offshore oil (shut down since the massive 2015 Refugio spill), and federal attempts to offer up new leases on public lands and in our ocean, we should count it as a major win that none of these have actually moved forward.

Some have given up. All have been set back.

The biggest threat currently is Exxon's oil trucking plan which was delayed by news that Phillips66 was converting a refinery to renewable diesel and wouldn't take ExxonMobil's oil, thank you very much. We are waiting for a new hearing date. The federal leases hinge on the outcome of the

elections. Trump has said he'll spare Florida's ocean, as he needs those voters. California, not so much.

GREEN TRANSPORT

Santa Barbara MTD already committed to 100% electric bus fleet by 2030, just in time to help along a statewide requirement. Now they have joined Santa Barbara County in electrifying their fleet cars as well.

The MTD installed 14 new ChargePoint Level 2 electric vehicle chargers to provide infrastructure for a new fleet of all-electric light duty vehicles consisting of 14 new Chevy Bolts. Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District provided grant funds toward the charger costs from their Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Program.

COMMUNITY CHOICE

Checking the Clean Power Alliance's latest reports, which rolled out last year in over 30 jurisdictions across LA and Ventura Counties, I count almost 800,000 homes and businesses on 50% or 100% renewable energy plans.

Nearly 300,000 of those are using 100% renewable energy. That's a remarkable acceleration. SB County plans to join a similar program called Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE), next year. I just got appointed to the Advisory Council so I'm taking a close look. While they are behind Ventura in renewable percentages, they have a goal of 100% renewable energy by 2030. It is a testament to how far we've come that this now feels slow to me.

PROJECTS PROCEED

This last year I spent more time than ever before supporting renewable energy projects. We supported battery storage projects all over our Chapter, the Strauss

Wind project near Lompoc, solar on Santa Barbara parking lots, the Goleta City Hall, and at local schools.

The Goleta School District has a bond measure on the November ballot that will provide funds for facility improvements including renewable projects that will save the district money in the long run.

SUMMERLAND BEACH

The State plans to cap two leaking old wells on Summerland Beach from Oct 5-19. This is good news to anyone tired of all the tar and smells on an otherwise lovely beach. It's not the first capping project there either as leaks were detected back in 1994.

Thank our State Senator Hannah Beth Jackson, termed out this year, for securing money to identify and cap abandoned wells on our beaches -- and for that matter, her entire brilliant career as an effective environmental champion.

NO LEASE PLEASE

Our chapter has signed on to a letter strongly opposing the Bureau of Land Management initiating new oil/gas leases in Kern, SB and Ventura Counties starting in December.

"Clearly the scientific, public, and political controversy over ending eight years of protection from oil and gas leasing also requires preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for this and any other proposed lease sales," concluded the letter, signed by our executive director, Jon Ullman. The BLM is trying to get away with just a lower level analysis.

Citing "the full force of the climate emergency this summer (heat waves and fire) have been greatly intensified by the warming climate (due to fossil fuel extraction, the largest driver of climate change)."

The chapter is now part of dozens of other groups lobbying to stop the lease sale ranging from Audubon to Youth vs Apocalypse.

Setbacks...

continued from page 1

update also includes implementing a building code by 2023 that will create cleaner, healthier new buildings without gas. Oil's fossil fuel cousin, fracked gas, still powers a majority of California's heating and appliances. The combustion of gas inside our homes produces harmful indoor air pollution, specifically nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitric oxide, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, and ultrafine particles leading to sickness and death.

Another recent study by UCLA found that when the stove and oven are used simultaneously for an hour, acute exposures to nitrogen oxide (NO₂) exceeds national and California-based ambient air quality thresholds more than 90% of the time. Cutting gas would lead to 354 fewer deaths.

Building all-electric buildings cuts costs. A recent analysis by the Statewide Utility Codes and Standards Team found that building all-electric reduced construction costs on average \$5,000 for single-family homes and over \$2,000 per unit in a multi-family building.

More than 30 cities and counties have already adopted all-electric new building reach codes.



It's happening right here in Santa Barbara's County! While oil is shrinking, the Strauss Wind Project has broken ground in the Lompoc area to afford us clean renewable energy. It is designed to generate enough power for 45,000 homes, generate \$40 million in taxes over 30 years and reduce up to 200,000 metric tons of CO₂ annually. (Photo courtesy of developer BayWare Wind LLC)

Club launches 30 x 30

The Sierra Club has launched a bold new visionary conservation agenda that includes our partner organizations.

The 30 x 30 Conservation Agenda calls on our nation to preserve 30% of the land and water mass of our nation by 2030.

That's to ensure we can meet the challenge of climate change and provide space for wildlife and communities to thrive.

Flourishing natural areas and parks are indispensable to people's health, prosperity, cultural traditions, and enjoyment. They also play a critical role in combating the climate and extinction crises.

Unfortunately, 1 million acres of nature are being lost to development in the US each year. One million species are at risk of extinction worldwide. In the last 40 years, wildlife populations have declined by 60 percent because of habitat loss, climate change, and other environmental factors.

Key components include:

- Conserve and restore large, intact landscapes and wildlife corridors.

- Implement land conservation strategies that contribute to climate solutions.

- Support the conservation and stewardship vision and priorities of Tribal Nations.

- Conserve more open lands and parks near communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities.

Yes, it's bold, yes there is opposition but for the moment we

are urging members of congress to rally around House Resolution 835 to show congressional support for the 30 x 30 agenda. Check out the detail of the campaign here:

<https://tinyurl.com/30X30campaign>

EVENTS

Oct 15: **Waterfront's History**, a 7pm Zoom event by historian Neal Graffy. "In the 1870s, John Peck Stearns and his new wharf literally opened Santa Barbara's front door and the world rushed in," said the notice from the host, Santa Barbara Maritime Museum. Details or to sign up, got to: www.SBMM.org

Oct 16: **Wild & Scenic Film Festival**, a signature event for the Ventura Land Trust, must go virtual this year. It inspires environmental activism and a love for nature. Guests can enjoy it at home with food and drinks via special ticket packages featuring local restaurants, breweries, and raffle items. To sign up, go to: www.VenturaLandTrust.org/events

Oct 17: **Geology Hike** at Haskell's Beach, led by Susie Bartz for the Gaviota Coast Conservancy. From 2-5pm. Details at: www.GaviotaCoastConservancy.org

Nov 3: **The Election**, called "one of the most consequential elections in history" by the Sierra Club. Haven't voted yet? This is your last chance. Don't blow it!

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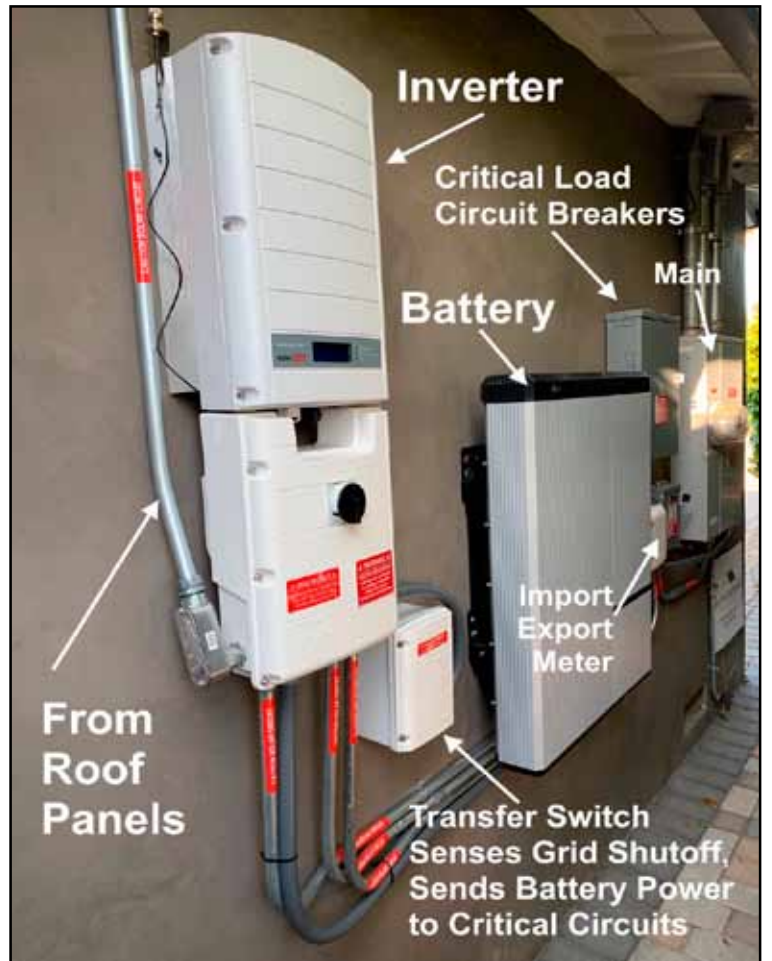
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Typography and production by Dan Fuller



SB Group member Jim Taylor's solar + battery system: Has eight circuits into a breaker box, energized by battery when grid goes down (office, internet, fridge etc.). Sun recharges the battery backup, so he's "ready for the zombie Apocalypse" Jim says. Read "Big Push..." story on page 1. (Photo by Jim Taylor)

SIGHTINGS

Shoe strikes, fun, sun and uranium!

By John Hankins

We may be getting used to Zoom meetings and webinar events during the quarantine, but we don't like it.

Missing are the amazing Outings we have every week throughout the year, having our trained leaders show you places you haven't been before or pointing out aspects on trails you have.

We're still in full mode via our activism and some limited outdoor things, like the Coastal Clean-up. 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 those free outings, 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

Sept 26: **Shoe Strike** by the Society of Fearless Grandmothers, sponsors of monthly demonstrations for Climate Justice on the beach near Stearns Wharf. The shoes stand in for people who can't participate due to the pandemic. SB Sierra Club put out a call for members to participate. Register for future events at: FearlessGrandmothersSB@gmail.com

Sept 24: **Solar + battery** storage webinar with a Q&A sponsored by our chapter is now available online. The club has partnered with Swell

Energy to offer solar and home battery solutions to Santa Barbara and Ventura county residents, and to create a clean, "virtual power plant" alternative to a polluting gas power plant. While the webinar is over, you can still catch its valuable info; see story pg 1.

Sept 24: **Hanson Nature Preserve** is nearly 1,000 acres of river and upland habitat, spanning almost two miles of the mighty Santa Clara River. Located at the end of Mission Rock Rd. The Nature Conservancy conducted a Zoom meeting to introduce it to the public. The Ventura Sierra Club is in tough in helping restore this area, formally a gravel mine.

Sept 15: **Good news** as the Ventura County Supervisors finalized the General Plan by a vote of 3-2 (see Sept. 1 notice) as Bennett, Zaragoza and Parks voted in the majority. This is a bold plan to tackle climate change and protect residents, disproportionately affecting communities of color from health impacts of oil; also, it includes more electric construction and trail access in Ojai. See story pg.1.

Sept 1: **Oil reined in** via a 3-2 vote of the Ventura Board of Supervisors where more than 100 members and supporters of the Sierra Club wrote to advocate for more space between oil and gas wells and homes and schools. A study shows more than 8,000 residents live within 2,500 feet of an oil well, most of whom

are Latinx. CFROG was also a leader in this issue. Read the whole story here:

<https://tinyurl.com/OilSpacedOut>

Aug 27: **Platform Holly** decommissioning town hall on how to ensure that all the facilities are removed, and the environment restored. State Lands and city of Goleta hosted with Sierra Club participating.

Aug 26: **Liberty Canyon Wildlife** Overpass plan just got a \$5 million boost from the CA Wildlife Conservation Board. To be located in the Agoura Hills area allowing wild animals to cross the 8-lane 101 freeway, the Sierra Club has been a major supporter in getting it done.

Aug 26: **Big Battery Project** by SCE has started in Carpinteria for the SB-Ventura coast to tap into renewable energy and provide electricity during outages. Our Los Padres Chapter was cited as a major supporter in the *Carpinteria Coastal View* article about this Vallecito Energy Storage Resilience Project.

Aug 25: **Water Talks** about Casitas Springs webinar to help ensure that community needs, concerns, questions, and insights become part of the State's future water projects. Also, about water issues throughout Ventura County. Features a who's who of water agencies and local experts. Sponsored by Los Padres Chapter. Check it out here:

<https://tinyurl.com/CasitasWaterPanel>

Aug 14: **Uranium mine-field** story in *Ojai Valley News* by Perry Van Houten detailed the controversy with our chapter's Jim Hines in touch with Washington DC and, while the threat to open up the claim above Lake Casitas on Superior Ridge is real, Jim said "the thing that could save us is that it's a small site." If the project does come up, the club and Los Padres ForestWatch, among others, are prepared to fight it. Full story is here:

<https://tinyurl.com/UraniumMinefield>

Aug 9: **Online Get-together** with the Ventura Sierra Club by way of Meetup with over 30 Enviro going, including an "active fun man," "RD nutritionist who loves nature," a lady who "would love to meet other adventurers," and so many other fine folk

Aug 5: **Call-in testimony** on AB345, a bill to create an environmental justice component for the state's Natural Resources Agency, notably to support increased setbacks from houses and schools by oil facilities of at least 2,500 feet. Sierra Club and our local chapter members called in to the Senate committee considering the Assembly bill.

Aug 5: **SB Council** agrees with Sierra Club to oppose Exxon using trucks to transport its offshore oil on a 6-0 vote. Our chair, Katie Davis, testified as did the Environmental Defense Center, among others.

Aug 4: **Tax myth** that oil drilling contributes lots of taxes and school funding debunked by our Executive Director Jon Ullman in a *SB News-Press* article on Exxon's trucking oil proposal. Exxon claims it would contribute millions of dollars to the county.



The Santa Clara River goes through the Hanson Preserve for at least two miles and the nearly 1,000 acres is in the process of being restored; see story below. (©Photo by Barbara Wampole for The Nature Conservancy)

Up the lazy river

Progress is being made on the Hanson Nature Preserve, nearly 1,000 acres of river and upland habitat, spanning almost two miles of the mighty Santa Clara River.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been working since 2004 to restore this area of former gravel mine back to a native riparian system and is now working on opening this preserve for public enjoyment. Our Ventura Sierra Club has been a key supporter with volunteers.

A special Zoom presentation was held on Sept. 24 to hear from TNC staff about this beautiful nature preserve and how you can get involved. The Preserve is located midway between Santa Paula and Saticoy, (exit Hwy 126 at Briggs road), at the end of Mission Rock Road.

This work has included extensive removal of the non-native Arundo plant, wetland creation, and planting with native plants. Restored native riparian forest in the project area supports several state and federally listed species of birds, fish, and reptiles.

There are few locations on the Santa Clara River that are accessible to the public. It is the hope of TNC that this preserve will provide a beautiful place for outdoor education, as well as a place for communities to gather, view wildlife, hike, and connect with the dynamic Santa Clara River.

After the Zoom presentation, all feedback was positive, such as this post from Triker PC: "Great presentation, good to see that there are plans to open this amazing area for the community to enjoy this beautiful area."

"Feel good after the meeting? Me too! Here is the website with the video, the architectural concept for the public area/trails, and a link to get on their contact list as well as give input now by the survey. See you out there soon," said Nina Danza, Ventura Sierra Club chair.

She added, "be sure to get on the contact list and become a volunteer at the site" (contact list is at the end of the link).

<https://tinyurl.com/SClaraRiverPreserve>



As a 13-year old in 2007, Alex Looz of Ventura and his mother started start iMatter, a climate change activist group aimed at youth; check them out at www.iMatterYouth.org. He erected these posts on the Ventura Promenade years ago as a wake-up call to rising sea levels. Lots of good information on the posts. We hear Santa Barbara will be erecting similar sea level posts. (Photo by Condor John)

Fines for oil spills

An important bill increasing fines and penalties for oil spills was signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom on Sept. 24.

The bill is close to the Los Padres Chapter's hearts not only because of the numerous spills in our area, but also because our local Assembly member, Monique Limón, wrote it (AB 3214).

Existing law makes it a felony to knowingly engage in or cause the discharge or spill of oil into waters of the state, or knowingly fail to begin cleanup, punishable by a fine of not less than \$5,000 or more than \$500,000 for each day a violation

occurs. It is also a felony to fail to notify the Office of Emergency Services with a fine of not less than \$2,500 or more than \$250,000 for each day a violation occurs for a first conviction, and double that for a second conviction.

Limón's bill would double the minimum and maximum amounts of the fines described above.

The bill would authorize the court to also impose upon a person convicted of knowingly causing a spill or failing to begin cleanup a fine of up to \$1,000 per gallon spilled more than 1,000 gallons of oil.

All physical meetings suspended - we're online

Group News

www.SBSierraClub.org

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
~ Chapter website and blog at: www.SierraClub.org/LosPadres

SANTA BARBARA GROUP

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

<http://www.sbsierraclub.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 ~Volunteers needed; your talents could make a difference. Call 350-0629 or: RebeccaAugust@mac.com

VENTURA NETWORK

~ For board meeting dates, times and location email:

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

CONEJO GROUP

~ Events, outings and meetings will be sent to you if you sign up at ConejoGroup@gmail.com

Otherwise, get all information on this eastern Ventura County Group from Hugh Warren, 341-6295 mail@hkwarren.net

www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo
www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo/outings

Comeback condors now wild and free

A true conservation success, the Ventura Sierra Club hosted a fact-filled and fascinating look into “The Comeback of the Condor” earlier this year.

Comeback indeed, even after the horrendous fires throughout California. As of press time, 90 of the 100 condors in the Northern Los Padres Forest and near Big Sur were accounted for via radio transmitters. The Big Sur sanctuary was burned, but people and condors had evacuated.

However, among the missing condors is Iniko, whose name means “born during troubled times.” The baby condor hatched on April 25 when the troubled times of the pandemic was increasing, according to the condor sanctuary. We hope it emerges from the fire.

The club’s event was held at the Foster Library on March 10 just before the Covid-19 quarantine shut down face-to-face meeting. Volunteers from the Friends of the Condor Wild and Free showed off a faux condor egg big enough to scramble a breakfast for a family of four or more, a condor hand puppet, skull and souvenir condor puppets that are cute and cuddly, unlike the bare-faced bird that feeds upon carrion.

Since then, for the first time in

nearly 50 years, condors were spotted landing within Sequoia National Park in May and continuing near Moro Rock, a popular hiking destination and in the Giant Forest area.

Volunteer Jill Forman said that the condors can “strip a stillborn calf in less than 90 minutes.” Such calves are provided by ranchers and frozen at the Fillmore Fish Hatchery. The birds have up to a 9 ½ foot wingspan and weigh about 25 pounds or less, she said.

The condors were literally brought back from the brink of extinction with the wild population numbering only 22 in the 1980s. A controversial capture program was instituted for a zoo breeding program with the hope that eventually there’d be enough birds hatched to release them into the wild, Forman explained.

Well, that has happened, just last July the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported the endangered birds have hatched 1,000 eggs. This important milestone was announced by NPR news with the headline: “Once Nearly Dead as The Dodo, California Condor Comeback Reaches 1,000 Chicks.” You can view that landmark hatching here: <https://tinyurl.com/1000condors>

Forman said the hard task of rescuing the species from extinction



Vince Gerwe welcomes the public during a Friends of the Condor outing. (Photo by Condor John Hankins)

is a multi-million-dollar effort with partners including Fish and Wildlife, US Geologic Survey, University of California, National Park Service, Ventana Wildlife, various zoos and bird organizations.

The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) currently flies free along the western coastal mountains of the United States and Mexico and the northern desert mountains of Arizona. Fossils from the Pleistocene era have been found in various parts of North America, but that long history was in danger due to hunters and lead poisoning, the latter of which is still a threat.

There are two condor sanctuaries within a short drive in our chapter region; at Bitter Creek near Maricopa (Kern County) and Hopper Mountain near Fillmore. You can’t go untended onto either refuge, but the Friends can take you. You can get close enough on public roads to see them, however. While tours may not be happening right now, get on the list at: www.FriendsOfCondors.org

Close at hand are live condors at the Santa Barbara zoo, featuring birds which cannot be released into the wild for various reasons. The zoo also has a robust educational component.

~ By John Hankins

Plastic recycling a ‘betrayal of trust’

“How Big Oil Misled the Public into Believing Plastic Would Be Recycled” is the headline to an important NPR investigation.

The story, published in September, is part of a joint investigation with the PBS series *Frontline* that includes the documentary “Plastic Wars,” which aired March 31 on PBS. It is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/pbsPlasticWars>

The Sierra Club has long fought against the flood of plastics, notably the single-use variety, but has since expanded it to an AddUp Campaign to “stand up to protect public health over plastic industry fear-mongering.”

“Plastics are made from fossil fuels. As the oil and gas industry is being pushed back by clean energy, they’ll do anything to make sure that creating the petrochemicals for single-use plastics continues to make a profit,” according to the Sierra Club. Act here: <https://tinyurl.com/PlasticsCampaign>

The lead paragraphs to NPR Reporter Laura Sullivan’s story are:

Laura Leebrick, a manager at Rogue Disposal & Recycling in southern Oregon, is standing on

EAVESDROPS
“Feeling good about that compostable cup you bought your juice in? It is very unlikely it will actually get composted. Sorry.”

~ Op-ed subhead in the *LA Times* about the drive to find alternatives to single-use plastic and how hard it is to compost or recycle. It’s conclusion? The greenest alternative is the oldest one: use re-usable containers!

the end of its landfill watching an avalanche of plastic trash pour out of a semitrailer: containers, bags, packaging, strawberry containers, yogurt cups.

None of this plastic will be turned into new plastic things. All of it is buried.

“To me that felt like it was a betrayal of the public trust,” she said. “I had been lying to people ... unwittingly.”

Rogue, like most recycling companies, had been sending plastic trash to China, but when China shut its doors two years ago, Leebrick scoured the U.S. for buyers. She could find only someone who wanted white milk jugs. She sends the soda bottles to the state.

But when Leebrick tried to tell people the truth about burying all the other plastic, she says people didn’t want to hear it.

“I remember the first meeting where I actually told a city council that it was costing more to recycle than it was to dispose of the same material as garbage,” she says, “and it was like heresy had been spoken in the room: You’re lying. This is gold. We take the time to clean it, take the labels off, separate it and put it here. It’s gold. This is valuable.”

But it’s not valuable, and it never has been. And what’s more, the makers of plastic — the nation’s largest oil and gas companies — have known this all along, even as they spent millions of dollars telling the American public the opposite.

Read the rest of the story here: <https://tinyurl.com/nprPlasticScandal>

Fishery Web

Catherine Mullin of our SB Group reports “There is a new cool website/portal on the CA state managed fisheries. It lists

33 species, reports on their population, stock status, life history etc. The plan is to add more species.” See it here: <https://marinespecies.wildlife.ca.gov>

Mullin is a representative on the Channel Islands Marine National Sanctuary Management Council, which announced the website recently.



One of the Condor Friends’ best photographer, Stacy Bergman, captured this beauty overhead. One of the Condor Friends’ best photographer, Stacy Bergman, captured this beauty overhead. Follow Stacey’s photos at www.instagram.com/staceytax

Official hosts for condor tours, Sign up and/or donate here: www.friendsofcondors.org



Here’s the holding pen for condors that may be let loose in the wild. Often, wild condors come to visit their cooped-up cousins. (Photo by Condor John)



Condor chick and his dad hanging out in a cliff nest in the backcountry. (Photo courtesy Fish & Wildlife Service)



The folks from Friends of the Condor who participated in the Comeback event hosted by Ventura Sierra Club are: (from left) Cindy Martin holding a condor skull, Jill Forman with a condor puppet (used to feed condors at zoos), David Villalpando with a condor egg and David Young with a condor puppet for sale. (Photo by Condor John Hankins)

Wildlife corridor is critical

By John Hankins

It's been one mountain lion kitten den after another this summer for National Park Service biologists in the Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills. In total, 13 kittens were born to five mountain lion mothers between May and August 2020.

Unfortunately, there have also been deaths, notably in late September when an adult was killed while trying to cross the 101 freeway in the Calabasas area, another last year on the 405 freeway and, according to a study by the National Park Service, 17 have been killed by motorists from 2002 to 2019.

A key solution is wildlife crossing bridges, notably one in the planning stages over eight lanes of the 101 freeway at Agoura Hills, allowing an expansion of the current isolated community of over a dozen lions living in the Santa Monica Mountains. Such a wildlife corridor is not only for the lions, but would also increase habitat for bobcats, coyotes, deer, fox and many other species.

The National Wildlife Federation is leading a fundraising campaign for the Agoura overpass,

already raising about \$16 million of its \$85 million goal to break ground in 2021, according to the *LA Times*. To donate, go to:

www.SaveLAcougars.org

Another good news event was a September ruling by a judge formally granting permission to four conservation organizations to help defend Ventura County's innovative wildlife connectivity ordinances—the first of their kind in California. Ordinance No. 4537 and Ordinance No. 4539, which increase protections for important designated wildlife corridors connecting the Los Padres National Forest, Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills, were challenged in court by industry groups last year.

Too, the proposed widening of the 101 freeway from Thousand Oaks to the city of Ventura is perhaps another opportunity to construct a wildlife overpass in the Conejo Grade area, said Jim Hines, our chapter's vice-chair.

"The Conejo Grade is a known wildlife crossing and the National Park Service has documented a number of cases where mountain lions and other wildlife have crossed the 101 freeway in the area. I have

joined the efforts of Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks in urging people to comment in favor of a 101 Conejo Grade wildlife overpass to be constructed during the 101-widening process," Hines said. Known as the 101 Communities Connected project, you can comment on that under public input:

<https://tinyurl.com/101Widening>

Back to the births ...

This is the first time this many mountain lion dens have been found within such a short period of time during the 18-year study, in which a total of 21 litters of kittens have been marked at the den site by researchers. Previously, the highest number of dens found in one year was four in 2015).

"This level of reproduction is a great thing to see, especially since half of our mountains burned almost two years ago during the Woolsey Fire," said Jeff Sikich, a wildlife biologist at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. "It will be interesting to see how these kittens use the landscape in the coming years and navigate the many challenges, both natural and human-caused, they will face as they grow older and disperse."



A study in autumn leaves is a wonder to the eyes. (Photo by Niall Fritz)

Enjoy a cool autumn

By Jim Hines

Yes, even I take a break from the world of environmental activism. I wanted all my friends, fans and supporters to enjoy the Autumn season, my favorite and truly a season to enjoy for all its beauty.

Autumn foliage colors, red autumn berries, everything pumpkin, cooler nights and shorter days define this season.

Plus, there is much to do in the garden during Autumn ... bulbs to be planted such as fragrant hyacinths, colorful daffodils, stately tulips, cheerful crocus and many more. Planting bulbs now will assure that your spring garden is filled with endless beauty.

Cool season annual flowers go in now, such as fragrant sweet peas, giant snapdragons, fragrant stock, stately Iceland poppies and cheerful dianthus. Plant now to have a colorful yard before the holiday season arrives.

And the cool season

vegetable garden will be filled with cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, many varieties of lettuce, onions and edible peas. Root crops can be planted as well: beets, carrots, radishes and turnips. Plant now to assure wonderful plates of healthy edibles at your holiday meals.

We are visually dazzled by the colorful leaves of Liquid amber, flame red Chinese Pistachio and brilliant Sapinum trees.

Ornamental berries also light up our gardens, red berries on Pyracantha, Cotoneaster, Nandinia, Holly and CA native Toyon say, look at us it's Autumn!

But most importantly, enjoy the Autumn season for what she is, a season of grand beauty. Take a drive along a scenic highway where you see live Fall colors. Eat pumpkin everything, drink apple cider and harvest Autumn squash (such as acorn, butternut, Hubbard and banana squash).

Allow Autumn to fill your days with peaceful bliss.



A plethora of mountain lion kitten litters totaled 21 this year in the Santa Monica Mountains area, the most in the 18 years that they've been studied. However, there were also deaths, notably as some tried to cross the freeway. (Photos courtesy of NPS and CHP)

Virtual tours a click away

A virtual tour is a panoramic view or video simulation of an existing place that can be viewed online, often for travel or vacation-related research. They can take many forms, such as a collection of panoramic images that are played in sequence to view like a moving video with added

sound and text effects or using models in place of real-life video and images. Some virtual tours also include music or narration describing points of interest.

Taking it a step further, certain virtual tours can be combined with a treadmill or stationary bike to simulate the experience of hiking or cycling in the outdoors.

However, don't totally count out actual adventures on the ground. The Sierra Club has numerous domestic and international service trips and tourist adventures available. Check them out here:

www.content.sierraclub.org/outings

Examples of online tours include a Virtual Yosemite, a groundbreaking interactive tour of one of America's most popular and spectacular natural environments.

Closer to home, the National Marine Sanctuary System offers virtual tours of a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. From the thriving kelp forests of Channel Islands to the treasured coral reefs of the Florida Keys, few places on the planet can compete with the wonders of the National Marine Sanctuary System.

Grand Canyon in Depth is a video podcast of eight episodes that explores the natural and human history of Grand Canyon National Park. Join park rangers, scientists, and historians as they

take us beyond the rim of the canyon to discover the diversity of life and the extraordinary beauty of Grand Canyon National Park.

www.VirtualYosemite.org
www.Sanctuaries.NOAA.gov/vr
<https://tinyurl.com/GrandCanyonSeries>

There are so many more available partly due to the pandemic reducing the chances of actual outings. Outside Magazine and Expedia have some of the best links. Check them out:

<https://tinyurl.com/OutsideVirtual>
<https://tinyurl.com/ExpediaVirtual>

Poison bill

In a win for wildlife, Governor Newsom signed AB 1788 into law on Sept. 29, which would ban the use of deadly second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides, the rat poisons which kill mountain lions, wildlife, and household pets.

Entitled the California Ecosystems Protection Act of 2020, it adds to existing law. The bill was introduced by Assembly member Richard Bloom and co-authored by Laura Friedman and Henry Stern, all from Southern California.

There are exemptions, such as allowing them if used by a trained government agency employee for public safety issues such as rat and insect infestations, offshore island to combat non-native species, research purposes and limited "agricultural activities" such as in a warehouse that is self-contained.

Los Padres Chapter Vice Chair Jim Hines, who also leads the Sierra Club California Wildlife Team, was the Sierra Club lead on lobbying for this bill's passage.

Other groups and the public have also been lobbying for it to pass for over two years.

The Wild & Scenic Film Festival, a signature event for the Ventura Land Trust, must go virtual this year. It's happening from 6:30 to 9pm Friday, Oct. 16, and each household ticket includes video on demand for five days afterward. It connects VLT's local work to similar efforts around the globe. Tickets include food and drinks and raffles. For details and tickets:

www.VenturaLandTrust.org/events



Panorama above Goleta by Robert Bernstein

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

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 Feb. 1, 2021. Check the Los Padres Chapter website for updates to this policy at:

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.



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

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 of the Punch Bowls in area of Santa Paula Canyon may extend into October. Check with Ojai District, 646-4348.

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/LPNF>

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
<https://LPFW.org>
www.HikeLosPadres.com
www.SBSierraClub.org
www.SantaBarbaraTrailGuide.com
www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com
<https://SBTrails.org>
www.VenturaCountyTrails.org
<http://Hikes.VenturaCountyStar.com>

Drive EV week was virtual, but real

During National Drive Electric Week every September, the Sierra Club has conducted popular events that display owners' cars with the ability to ask practical questions from those who know.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, that couldn't happen this year, so we went virtual as did the Santa Barbara Community Environmental Council, often a partner with us.

And just in time for the national event, CA Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an executive order that stated: "It shall be a goal of the State that 100 percent of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks will be zero-emission by 2035 ... that 100 percent of medium and heavy-duty vehicles in the State be zero-emission by 2045 for all operations where feasible and by 2035 for drayage trucks. It shall be further a goal of the State to transition to 100 percent zero-emission off-road vehicles and equipment by 2035 where feasible."

Of course, some of those goals must pass muster with agencies and the legislature, but any case, vehicle manufacturers are scrambling to provide more EV choices and charging companies are also erecting public stations by the thousands.

A lot of the virtual events happened from Sept. 28 through Oct.

Our wilderness course on hiatus

Our popular Wilderness Basics Course will not happen next year (2021) because of pandemic restrictions.

"For 10 years WBC grew and grew and grew, amazing leadership, amazing staff and amazing students and then Covid hit, and we had to cancel the course half way through," commented Jim Hines, our chapter chair and member of the WBC board. That 8-week term started on Feb. 19 and four weeks later it had to shut down.

"Now with national Sierra Club's policies restricting face-to-face meetings, outings and more -- through at least Feb. 28, 2021 -- we decided to cancel WBC for 2021 and hopefully shoot for a return in 2022," Hines

Trips open

The Sierra Club has opened new international and domestic trips, including many cancelled trips of 2020 (due to Covid-19) that are rescheduled for 2021.

Part of the largest grassroots environmental organization in the country, Sierra Club Outings provides environmentally friendly outdoor adventures—from Tahoe to Tibet—for people of all ages, abilities, and interests.

Service volunteer trips are lower cost and include some work and free days, such as taking out invasive ice plant around the Piedras Blanca Light Station, just six miles north of San Simeon State Park. Or go north to Alaska to Resurrection Bay for restoration.

Domestic trips include winter experiences, Hawai'i, the American Caribbean and more.

You can experience history and culture tours, wildlife expeditions, and extended treks internationally.

For all the amazing adventures, just go to:

www.SC.org/outings



WBC co-founder Teresa Norris enjoying students learning about the wilderness during a prior course. (Photo by Arturo Hernandez)

added.

It was a hard announcement to make to all the staff, volunteers, speakers, and others who make it happen. Co-founder Teresa Norris wrote: "The WBC board discussed this in depth recently and reluctantly voted to postpone WBC until 2022. My hope is that you will return when we reconvene, but in the meantime, we encourage you to enjoy the wilderness as individuals and perhaps with friends you've met through WBC. Best wishes, Teresa."



Santa Barbara MTD recently installed 14 new ChargePoint Level 2 electric vehicle chargers for a new fleet of all-electric light duty vehicles of 14 2020 Chevy Bolts. The new fleet replaces aging gasoline-powered sedans. SoCal Edison covered the costs of upgrades and the SB APCD provided significant grant funds. (photo contributed)

4. Some of those included an EV driver and dealership meet and greet, an EV (Electric Vehicle) 101 Lunch and Learn and one about incentives. Those who signed up got a free EV starter kit with informational brochures and goodies. The CEC conducted an EV 101 webinar on Oct. 2 across both counties.

"The Ventura events highlighted the lean-air benefits, cost savings and fun provided by driving an electric vehicle," said Ventura Supervisor Kelly Long. "By increasing access to electric vehicles, we are supporting the state's goal of putting five million zero-emission cars on the roads by 2030."

Now in its 10th year, National Drive Electric Week celebrates the benefits of electric vehicles. This year, the experience was mostly online.

Here's some handy links that will catch you up to the fast accelerating EV campaigns:

Go to CEC's website to catch their webinars and info:
www.cecsb.org/drive-clean

The Ventura County Regional Energy group has an EV blueprint here:
www.VCEnergy.org

Follow the EV Advocates of Ventura County here:

www.facebook.com/groups/45762245111506

This neutral-brand overall

educational website is perhaps the best for all levels of education:

www.PlugInAmerica.org

Breaking news and the how what and why of EVs:

www.INSIDEEVs.com

Green car reports, hybrids and electric.

www.GreenCarReports.com

Fight of the century Petro vs Renewable

We are ecstatic about the news that Gov. Gavin Newsom is asking that all new cars sold after 2035 to be zero-emission vehicles and he threw his support to ban hydraulic fracturing, the latter of which requires legislative action.

The executive order, announced Sept. 23, is the nation's first state to mandate 100% zero-emission vehicles, but it's up to the CA Air Resources Board to implement the phase-out which would likely spark a Petroleum vs Renewables war. In the interim, incentives to buy electric are likely to increase. The order does not affect the ability to own gas-powered cars or buying or selling them used.

For those who might be a bit wary about moving from petroleum-based autos and trucks to renewables,

The year's hiatus was necessary because preparation for the annual spring course starts months before, and the extensive effort would be wasted if the quarantine policy goes past February.

"The Sierra Club has had a tremendous boost in respect from the outdoor community and the public because of WBC training hundreds of people, ranging from family members, couples, and singles of all ages to enjoy, be safe and secure in the outdoors, even when the weather turns or an accident happens," said Condor John.

"A Search and Rescue Team member once said our training makes their job easier and likely results in fewer need to rescue the uninformed or the unlucky," he added. SAR always has speakers at WBC as do other outdoor experts from groups (LP Forest Association, LP ForestWatch and more) and stores (Patagonia, REI, Real Cheap Sports et al).

We are determined that the WBC will spring forth again, in spring of 2021. Just like new growth would in the wilderness.

Drive Electric Website:
<https://sites.google.com/view/vcreadew>

And North America's leading nonprofit that has over 80 chapters.

www.ElectricAuto.org

Also see our story and links about solar power, batteries and EVs on page 1.

check out this remarkably simple ending to a Bill McKibben article in the *New Yorker*:

"Instead of finding a distant pool of petroleum and fracking the subsurface geology to make it flow, instead of shipping the crude to a refinery, and then to a gas station, and instead of pumping it into a car tank whose pistons must then explode it in small bursts to power a ton of sheet metal down a road ...

... instead of all that, you can let the wind turn a blade, take the resulting power down a wire and into a battery, and run a far simpler motor of a car, or a bus or a train."

He also makes salient points about how easy it is to retrain oil workers to work on renewables.



CFROG hires director

The Climate First: Replacing Oil & Gas (CFROG) Board of Directors has chosen Liz Beall as its new Executive Director, effective on Oct. 1.

“Liz is an outspoken advocate for environmental justice and has the vision, perseverance, and knowledge needed to achieve CFROG’s goals,” said John Brooks, board president.

Our Los Padres Sierra Club has worked with the group for years, sharing common goals.

Liz has a strong track record of nonprofit leadership and has dedicated her career to championing environmental sustainability. She is the founder of two Bay Area nonprofits: Full Circle Farm, an 11-acre educational farm on a public middle school campus,

and Wild Child, a wilderness-based environmental education program.

Liz moved to Ventura County in 2018.

“As a passionate advocate for a sustainable future, I am incredibly excited to help CFROG continue to expand its horizons – both programmatically and geographically – and make a positive and lasting impact on the future of the Central Coast.”

As the former Interim Executive Director for GreenFoothills, Liz oversaw a local environmental advocacy group responsible for significant victories for Bay Area open space preservation. She is a founding member of the Bay Area Children & Nature Collaborative and the Santa Clara County Food System



Alliance.

Liz holds her M.Sc. in medical anthropology from Oxford University, and her Bachelors’ from San Jose State University. A gifted storyteller, she is also a graduate of UCLA’s School of Theatre, Film, and Television. She, her husband John, and their two daughters live in Oxnard.

GREETINGS FRIENDS

My life in the wild

By Jim Hines

Greetings Friends

A young boy walks and walks and then stops to marvel, to gaze, to inspect and then he walks some more.

I am on a lifelong journey which started when I was five years old walking, exploring, riding my horse over the thousands



of acres of open space lands which made up my family’s ranch which included the land which is now Lake Casitas and the surrounding wild open space and the Los Padres National Forest.

I have always felt a need to be close to something bigger than myself and at that early age I experienced on the land my first face to face encounter with a mountain lion, my first fall into a flowing creek, my first look at a world of nature unlimited and untamed which would inspire me throughout my

Logo design a challenge

The City of Oxnard will be preparing a Climate Action Plan over the next 18 months and is asking artists, graphic designers, and anyone else to design a logo.

A graphic of what climate change looks like to you will help get some buzz going, and increase public engagement on this important CAP document.

Oxnard hopes to get a design in by 5pm Oct. 16. Go to this link for forms and official rules: www.Oxnard.org/CAP-logo

Protect Wilderness Act

People who fight for public lands took part in a major push in late September, meeting with lawmakers about the Protecting America’s Wilderness Act. The bill would safeguard more than 1 million acres across the Golden State and is supported by the Sierra Club and its Los Padres Chapter.

Jack Dyer, founder of Topa Topa Brewing Co. in Ventura, said his business depends on outdoor enthusiasts drawn to Los Padres National Forest and noted hiking, fishing and mountain bike riding are a key recreation worthy of protection.

During the last week of September, Dyer and almost two dozen others held a series of online meetings with members of Congress to ask that the bill be prioritized. It already passed the U.S. House in February, so now it’s up to the Senate to act. The measure contains several standalone bills that protect lands and rivers on the Central Coast, in parts of northwest California and in

life.

As I grew up, I continued my journeys in the wild to various natural areas across our nation and far off wild places in foreign lands, all the while marveling, learning and being inspired by the wild, the wild lands, the wild creatures and the wild experience.

I am alone in nature, but I am never lonely, I bond with all that is small and all that is large, I bond with the sky, I bond with the water and I bond with wild creatures.

In nature everything’s important, everything is connected, and everything works together for the harmony of our planet’s ecosystem.

I see, I hear, I feel, I touch, I listen, I smell and I taste ... the senses all come alive in the wild for there is no place better to connect with one’s self than in the wild.

I see life in the wild, I see death in the wild as the power of nature in the raw dictates how life is lived.

Yes, that first walk across the Rancho Santa Ana meadow started me on a journey which I never imagined, a journey of fascination, a journey of sadness, of longing, of love, of hope, of respect and a journey of appreciation for all which is wild.

Wild nature has truly touched me in many personal ways, I have learned, I have fallen, I have cried, I have laughed, I have loved and I have been forced to reckon with my own feelings about what is happening to the wild today and to take direct action to protect all that is wild.

Join the Sierra Club for action to preserve our wildlands and animals here: www.SierraClub.org

the San Gabriel Mountains.

Thomas Wong, a board member of the San Gabriel Valley Water District, said it’s especially critical that mountains behind Los Angeles be well-managed -- and this year’s devastating wildfires underscore that point.

“The San Gabriel Valley relies on the rain and snow that falls in the San Gabriel Mountains for a majority of our water supply,” he said. “It’s why we want to make sure we preserve the natural spaces of the watershed.”

Wong said heavily populated, lower-income communities also need better access to nature, and the pandemic has emphasized that need. In addition, he said, wildlife that inhabits public lands is even more dependent now on wildlife corridors as climate change affects their habitat.

The text of the Protecting America’s Wilderness Act (HR 2546) is online at: www.congress.gov

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF CALIFORNIA

Dear Californians,

The climate crisis is escalating, and it is devastating.

As another round of record-breaking wildfires tears through our state, choking our lungs, destroying homes, and forcing tens of thousands to evacuate, **we are running out of time.**

We’ve known for years of the deadly consequences of inaction, but our elected representatives have failed to meet the crisis. Without transformative action right now, the communities and ecosystems our lives depend on will be devastated—and those hit first and hardest will continue to be communities of color, low-income communities, and frontline workers. We cannot allow these calamities to continue.

And we don’t have to. We have the solutions to create a safer, more equitable future. **It is not too late.** It’s time we rise together to protect our families and our future.

Governor Newsom said last week that he is committed to taking greater steps to address climate change. Yet our state is *fueling* this crisis by maintaining the very thing causing it—vast fossil fuel operations. **Half-measures are a form of climate denial.** Californians must urge him to take the bold action we need now. Key state actions include:

- 1 End fossil fuel infrastructure:** Stop permitting new oil and gas drilling, pipelines and infrastructure, and accelerate a managed decline to phase out oil production and refining in California, starting with operations near homes and schools. Provide proper support and resources to ensure a fair transition for fossil fuel workers.
- 2 Increase the use of clean electricity:** Accelerate the building of solar, storage, wind and other clean technologies so that all our electricity is 100% zero-carbon by 2030, prioritizing communities at the frontlines of fossil fuel operations.
- 3 Phase out dirty fuels in our homes:** Require all-electric new buildings by 2022, ensure 100% of appliances sold in California are electric starting in 2025, and invest to ensure low-income families can affordably upgrade their homes.
- 4 Phase out polluting cars and trucks:** Move to 100% zero-emission vehicle sales by 2030 and accelerate public transportation solutions.
- 5 Appoint strong climate leaders** to regulatory agencies, like the Air Resources Board, who will champion bold solutions that simultaneously address climate change and other air pollution.

These solutions can and must secure our futures and be designed to support workers, protect communities most harmed by pollution, and help us rebuild a new safe, thriving way of life.

California alone cannot solve the climate crisis, but the Governor has the power to lead with a transformative vision and direct state agencies to make powerful, era-defining change.

CALL GOVERNOR NEWSOM TODAY and demand he take the bold actions this moment requires: 1-202-684-2465.

In solidarity, and with love—



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Learn more at sc.org/5fortheFuture

This Sierra Club statement ran in newspapers as a call to the people of California to realize that the climate crisis is escalating and is devastating (see Climate Watch story, back page). The environmental groups listed above have bonded together as a united front for immediate action.

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CLIMATE WATCH

Heat, smoke, covid...what's next? Hope!

CLIMATE WATCH: Heat and Smoke compound covid risks, green recovery more important than ever

By Sean Cummings

It feels somewhat absurd to write this column at this moment: in recent weeks, it seems stepping outside, opening one's eyes, and inhaling should have provided enough information on how the climate's doing.

The heatwave that struck California the first weekend of September brought temperatures in the 110s to the Santa Ynez Valley and the Santa Barbara foothills, with an unofficial 122 degree reading in Solvang. Ventura County fared no better; record breaking heat in the Fillmore foothills and Oak View (120 degrees) and in Ojai and Fillmore (118 degrees).

That's dwarfed, however, by Death Valley's recording on August 16th of 129.9 degrees Fahrenheit, Earth's hottest in almost a century.

These conditions form part of a familiar cycle: climate change intensifies heat waves and dry spells, leaving more dry fuel for bigger and more numerous wildfires. Over five million acres have burned this year across thirteen western states, with over three million in California alone. Over twenty times more acres have burned in California than by this time last year, making this our worst ever fire season. Oregon, meanwhile, after suffering wildfires south of Portland not seen in 300 to 400 years, may soon see the same pattern of fires-to-rains-to-mudslides that devastated

Montecito in 2018, according to the National Weather Service.

The fires' timing embodies one of scientists' biggest warnings; namely, that climate change causes disasters to compound. The smoke still blanketing swaths of the west, the CDC says, compromises our respiratory systems, increasing both the likelihood of contracting COVID-19 and the severity of its symptoms.

This is just one example of climate change exacerbating health risks. A July 2020 study in the National Bureau of Economic Research indicates that, without climate mitigation, rising temperatures will raise global mortality by 73 deaths for every 100,000 people by century's end—roughly equivalent to the current death toll of all infectious diseases together.

COVID's impact on climate change, in contrast, has turned out underwhelming: a recent study in Nature Climate Change indicates 2030 will be just 0.01 degrees Celsius cooler than it would have been without COVID-19 lockdowns. Hope remains, however. The same study estimated that avoiding fossil fuel bailouts in pandemic recovery efforts and putting just 1.2% of global GDP into low-carbon technology development could prevent 0.3 degrees Celsius of warming by 2050.

Santa Barbara County recently saw another hint of green recovery, as the Board of Supervisors voted to bring the county into compliance with a state CEQA update that evaluates new developments based on whether

they'll cause people to drive more. If it works as intended, the change could help reduce the transportation emissions that make the county one of the fastest warming in the nation.

Finally, on Sept. 23 Gov. Newsom signed an executive order asking that all new cars sold

after 2035 to be zero-emission vehicles, and he threw his support to ban hydraulic fracturing.

"We just went through an historic heat wave that was really a heat dome on the entire West Coast," Newsom said. "We believe our strategies moving forward will mitigate that."



We had a warning about climate change almost three years ago during the Thomas Fire followed by devastating floods, so much so that they made a movie out of it! It's available on YouTube.