

Vol. 21, No. 1 of 6

February - March 2021

Condor Call

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



© Photo by Cara Peden Cody

Electrifying! ... Energy Rap ... Egrets etc ... EVs go viral ... Earthrise

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Get it done in '21

Editor's note: Last issue we launched the Jim Hines Chronicles, which takes the emails sent to our Executive Committee by our premier lobbyist who phones and zooms to the nation's Capitol, state Capitol, politicians, other chapters, eco-groups and more. It was such a hit we were asked to continue it; this issue starts with his first December 2020 email and ends on our January 2021 deadline. Jim is our chapter's vice-chair and Ventura Conservation Director among other wildlife advocacy tasks.

Dec 18: **More good news** from the Transition Team. Great selections to lead Interior, EPA, President's Council on Environmental Quality and White House Office on Climate Change. This morning I sent my list of issues to Rep. Haaland; figured I best get my list in the door early . . . people who lobby start and never stop; that is how we get things done.

What I hear is that 2021 will be the year of YES and NO around the Central Coast Region:

NO new oil and mining in LP Forest,

NO new oil leases in federal waters,

YES to new protected ecosystems in LP Forest,

YES to new Marine Sanctuary, YES to addressing climate change,

YES to more funding for Condor Recovery,

YES to \$6.5 million for land in Santa Monica Mountains,

YES to Rim of the Valley Corridor.

Dec. 18: **Things are moving** along for wildlife; likely public hearing in April 2021 designating lion populations as endangered and habitats in five counties, including our two.

Dec 21: **Off I go again** to work on legislation to protect several federal land areas locally, a bill to create the largest protected wildlife corridor and to create the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

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By Jim Hines

Dec 4: **Darn . . . in last minute** negotiations House and



Senate conferees took out ALL national public lands legislation in the National Defense Authorization

Act, including our local legislation to protect the Los Padres National Forest (Central Coast Heritage Protection Act) and the Rim of the Valley Corridor.

We will be back in early 2021 with new bills and a new President.

Dec 17: **Breaking news . . .** President-Elect Biden has just announced that Rep. Deb Haaland will be the Secretary of the Interior, the first native American to lead Interior. I have on several occasions met with her as the Rep. from New Mexico. She has a proven record of protecting our public lands . . . so refreshing!

Your vote matters how?

Ever wonder if your vote matters?

After narrowly defeating Sierra Club-endorsed Christy Smith by just 333 votes in the Simi Valley area, Congress member Mike Garcia joined a group of extreme Congressional Republicans in objecting to the certification of President-elect Joe Biden's electoral college victory on Jan. 6.

These Republican lawmakers attempted to challenge the results of Arizona and Pennsylvania, two swing states Biden won, during and after the violent and deadly attack on the U.S. Capitol by a pro-Trump mob. This attempt to delegitimize a duly certified election arguably contributed to inciting the Capitol invasion and was denounced by other House Republicans.

Chief among them was House GOP Conference Chair Rep. Liz Cheney, who said the efforts, "set an exceptionally dangerous precedent," and

Republican Rep. Tom McClintock of California called the objections, "unconstitutional."

Garcia's decision was particularly surprising given he represents a purple-to-blue district that voted for Biden. A growing list of companies and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce announced they are cutting off donations to politicians like Garcia who opposed the Electoral College results, and legislation was introduced that calls for the expulsion of representatives like Garcia who supported the objection to the electoral results.

Remember his name and what he did if he decides to run again. We will.

COVER PHOTO

At 2 1/2 years ("I'm almost 3!") Evelyn is hiking the Ojai Trail. His mom says, "I love that my kid loves hiking." (Photo by Cara Peden Cody)

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February - March 2021

SB Council 'seize' the light

After a late-night marathon meeting in January, the Santa Barbara City Council unanimously directed staff to craft an all-electric new building code despite a misinformation campaign to derail it by a SoCalGas front group.

The vote directs staff to conduct workshops and craft appropriate code language. The council will vote on it later this winter.

Our Los Padres Chapter was fully behind the move and members lobbied hard for it. We were part of the 45 organizations which supported it.

It was past 8pm when staff presented a 50-slide PowerPoint detailing the cost-effectiveness, health and climate benefits of a new "Reach Code," which allows local jurisdictions to increase state standards.

During public comment, proponents of all-electric new buildings outnumbered opponents 31 to 5. Speaking in favor were architects, builders, climate groups, affordable housing experts and homeowners. They noted it would cut climate pollution, improve air quality in homes, and lower building costs by

phasing out costlier gas infrastructure in new construction.

City staff, council members and public speakers criticized a misinformation campaign launched by a SoCalGas front group called Californian for Balanced Energy Solutions or C4BES, which launched a spam text campaign in the weeks before the hearing, targeting thousands of Santa Barbara residents. It attempted to confuse existing buildings, which are not affected, with new building that would be affected.

Policy experts are questioning where the group obtained personal data of Santa Barbara residents, and the California Public Advocates Office has requested answers on this issue from SoCalGas directly.

More than 40 California cities already have all-electric building codes on the books. Building homes with electric appliances—which can run on 100% renewable energy—is healthier, safer, and more affordable. Santa Barbara plans to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2030 and updating the building code to reduce gas reliance is part of its goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035.

Highlights from the letter sent from the coalition include:

~ **Health:** "All-electric will improve indoor air quality, the combustion of gas inside our homes produces harmful indoor air pollution . . . which exceed EPA's definition of clean air (according to Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory) i.e. air pollution levels indoors would be illegal if found outdoors. One study found that gas stoves may be responsible for up to 12 percent of childhood asthma cases."

~ **Affordability:** "All-electric homes can be cheaper to build, with no need for new costly gas infrastructure . . . and can lower monthly utility bills for residents and businesses."

~ **Climate Change:** "California is experiencing an increasing occurrence of extreme heat waves . . . and many residents, particularly low-income families, do not have air conditioning posing new health and safety risks. Air conditioning is an important bonus from replacing gas furnaces with electric heat pump space heaters, as the heat pumps can operate in reverse and provide high efficiency cooling when needed. Electrification offers greater comfort, safety, and climate resiliency when temperatures peak and shifting to electric power dramatically lowers greenhouse gas emissions."

EAVESDROPS

"Special thanks to Katie (Davis) and Alex (Pujo). Katie organized the 45-group sign on letter and Alex must have gotten all the architects in the world out, because architects just kept testifying like planes lined up on a runway long into the night."

~ Jon Ullman, remarking about how our chapter officers were successful in convincing the SB City Council to support all-electric new construction (instead of the more polluting gas) during a Jan. 12 marathon hearing. See story above.



Liz Lamar, our new Chair of the Ventura Sierra Club is with Dr. Robert Bullard, "father of environmental justice". (photo contributed)

Welcome Liz Lamar

Editor's note: Elisabeth 'Liz' Lamar is now the Ventura Sierra Club's new chair, taking over from Nina Danza who remains active in the club. The Ventura Group includes Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Fillmore, the Santa Clara River drainage and the northern part of the County; call 805-667-7617 or visit:

www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/ventura

Please welcome Liz, a long-time club member; here's her welcome statement to you.

As a South Oxnard resident, I feel incredibly lucky to live near the Ormond wetlands, but remain heartbroken over the lack of accessibility due to

the powerplant and Superfund site. I dream of the day when complete restoration of Ormond Beach will come to fruition.

Since 2014, I have volunteered for the Ventura Sierra Club and am proud of the actions our group has embarked on to provide equitable access to nature for residents of Ventura County. My vision for our group is to foster connections in our Sierra club community and build our leadership team. Please join us! We meet the first Tuesday of the month on Zoom. Send an email for the meeting link.

elisabethlamar@hotmail.com

Sustaining members are vital for local victories

By Emily Engel

Support the Sierra Club's Los Padres Chapter by becoming a Sustaining Member today. All it takes is pledging \$20 a month or more to support our local chapter.

When you become a member of the Los Padres Chapter Sustaining Member Circle, you join a dedicated group of donors who serve as the foundation for the chapter's advocacy and conservation work. The steady flow of income provided by the Sustaining Member 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.

Our local work in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties has resulted in numerous victories, shared with a network of other like-minded environmental groups. Examples include an excellent record in winning local political offices, advocacy for the flora and fauna of the region, and programs to lessen climate change ranging from renewable energy, electric vehicles, and fossil-free new buildings. We are also heavily involved in promoting outdoor opportunities for all ages and a robust ethic for diversity.

Sustaining Member Circle donors allow our chapter to be

more nimble in the preservation of wildlife and wildlands, as well as in the fight for environmental protection in our local communities. Too, those in the Sustaining Member Circle receive exclusive benefits:



~ Advance notice of Los Padres Chapter events.

~ Insider updates on local environmental advocacy,

~ Subscription to *Condor*

Call,

~ Exclusive annual outings guided by a Sierra Club trained naturalist,

~ Recognition in the *Condor Call* and on the Los Padres Chapter website and

~ Special gift

It's easy to join, just go to: www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000

Select "make my gift monthly at \$20 or more per month." Once you complete your payment, you will be automatically enrolled in the Sustaining Member Circle, and more information will be sent to you by email.

We need at least 50 new members in the first half of

2021 to sustain our critical environmental advocacy in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. We can't do this work without the help of our volunteers – and through the support of Sustaining Members.

Los Padres Chapter conservation efforts depend on your support. 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.

Thank you for supporting the Los Padres Chapter Sierra Club.

Get it done...

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Dec. 29: **What a year 2020** . . . we faced unprecedented challenges in our personal and political lives. We lost friends and loved ones, made new friends, saw local businesses suffer and we rallied to help those in need during Covid.

But we also succeeded in getting great environmental leaders elected to public offices locally, statewide, and nationally all the way to the President of the United States!

But it could not have been done without the help, love and support from each of YOU and I want to thank each one of you.

Jan. 3: **Happy New Year!** It's the peak of whale watching season off our coast, a time for joy as people marvel at the grand beauty of resident and migrating whales . . . but danger lurks as marine mammals are entangled and killed by longline nylon commercial fishing nets.

Yesterday President Trump vetoed legislation which would have phased out the use of these nets in federal waters despite bipartisan support. So, we await a new Administration when I will start our new lobbying effort to "Get It Done in Twenty-One".

Jan. 5: **I can't begin** to tell you how refreshing it is to work with the Biden/Harris Transition Team, so impressed with the courtesy, interest in issues and knowledge that the members have on the issues. For me personally this is a far cry from the past four years of lobbying Trump officials who did not care, were rude and angry and had no knowledge of the policies of the offices they held.

I spoke yesterday with the new Chief of Staff to Kamala

Harris; folks, I can tell you we have a very approachable friend in the incoming Vice President; Vice President Pence's staff would not even meet with people like me.

Jan. 8: **Meet Deb Haaland**, the new Interior appointee here: <https://tinyurl.com/HaalandGuardian>

Jan. 13: **In speaking yesterday** with one of the Transition Team, I told her about the importance of national public lands in our region. Teaser Alert: watch for creation of a new national park unit this Spring in our region.

Jan. 15: **Earth Justice** on behalf of the Sierra Club and others filed suit in federal court to stop the Trump Administration from gutting protections for wolves. I am a declarant in this case, here's more information: <https://tinyurl.com/GrayWolfSuit>

Jan 21: **I had my first** conversation with a member of the Biden Administration which took office at noon on January 20th. I heard, "Jim we are here, the Biden Administration is in the Interior building" . . . what music to my ears.

I start my contacts early because when you advocate it is best to get in as soon as you can and stay there in their face (in a positive way) forever.

Jan. 22: **An executive order** by President Biden starts the process to re-establish Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments to their original boundaries. This was a top priority of the Sierra Club.

Jan 29: **Now that President** Biden has officially incorporated the 30 x 30 Conservation Plan into his Administration's policies, our work will really begin in earnest.

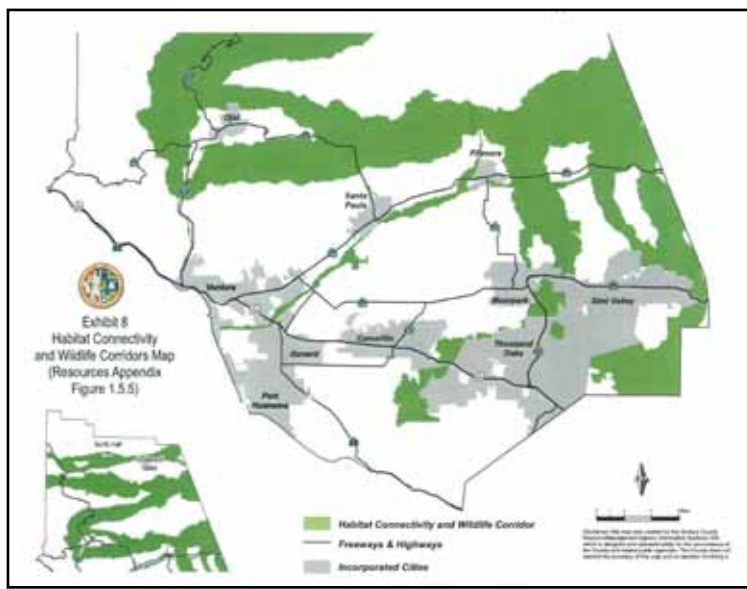
We have a lot of environmental damage to repair, we have whole ecosystems to restore, we have species imperiled

and this is their last chance, our oceans and marine mammals cry for our help. we will rally to their call and we will "Get it Done in Twenty-One"!

~ Edited by John Hankins



"New year, new cat!" the National Park Service wrote on Facebook. "Welcome to our puma family - P-95!" He is now among 10 radio-collared mountain lions being tracked as part of the NPS study. Seven of them are in the Santa Monica Mountains, two in the Simi Hills and one — the beloved P-22 — in Griffith Park. Map shows wildlife corridors in our region. (Photo courtesy NPS)



ENERGY RAP

Offshore wind instead of oil?

By Katie Davis
Chapter Chair

Inauguration Action

Attention shifted to the federal government as President Biden started out of the gate with quick climate and environmental action.

On Day One, President Biden rejoined the global Paris Climate Agreement, restored national monuments such as Bears Ears, stopped oil leasing in the Arctic Refuge; revoked permits for the Keystone XL pipeline; and ordered review and revision of a range of Trump era regulations, policies and fossil fuel giveaways.



These included improving fuel efficiency standards for vehicles and buildings, reducing methane emissions, and ensuring the costs of climate change are factored into government actions. These actions do much to restore science, due process, and international credibility. Hurrah.

Bipartisan Wins

That said, not everything done under Trump needs to be undone. The COVID relief and economic stimulus bill passed and signed in December included solar and wind tax credit extensions and the first major energy research and development legislation in a decade. It will support technology improvements in things

like renewable energy, storage, grid modernization, efficiency, and storage.

Perhaps least sexy but most consequential, the bill phases out hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), a key refrigerant in our home and industrial air conditioners that is a potent greenhouse gas. Scientists estimate that global implementation of a HFC phase out could reduce global warming by 0.5 degrees Celsius (nearly 1 degree Fahrenheit) by decade's end. That's big. Bipartisan stuff can happen. It just doesn't make big splashy news.

Beautiful Bluffs Back

More good news on the oil well clean-up front when California State Lands contracted to have a company plug two old leaking wells off Summerland beach. The oil from the large tank visible from the Carpinteria bluffs is being removed as part of the on-going Venoco clean up and decommissioning.

"Exciting news" from Heal the Ocean that the State Lands Commission will cap two more wells on Summerland Beach, during the last half of 2021! "Better yet, there might be enough money left over in this funding cycle to tackle oil problems at Haskell's Beach near Bacara," HTO said.

Similarly, in Goleta, leftover contaminants from Venoco's former Ellwood Marine Terminal tanks and pipelines are also being removed. UCSB has taken the lead to ensure

the facility is cleaned up as the tanks are on university property.

Interestingly, it turns out that cleaning up old oil wells is important for the climate. A recent study by McGill University finds that methane emissions from abandoned oil and gas wells in Canada and the US have been greatly underestimated and are the 10th and 11th largest sources of anthropogenic methane emission in the US and Canada, respectively. Judging by the methane plumes captured by a NASA plane flying over oil fields in our region, we have more work to do here.

Spill Threat Watch

In Santa Barbara we're still waiting for Exxon to come back with their plans for restarting drilling off the Gaviota coast that's been shut down since the 2015 Refugio oil spill, along with their highly polluting processing plant.

The question it's working on is where to send trucks full of oil now that the Santa Maria pump station is slated for closure. We also hear that felonious Plains Pipeline still hopes to build an oil pipeline across sensitive rivers, parks and public lands. We expect to know more about these projects in late spring.

The good news is that the Trump plan to offer new leases in the Pacific never was finalized, and Congressman Salud Carbajal reintroduced the CA Clean Coast Act on Jan. 25 in hopes to establish a moratorium on new oil leases off our coast. Here's hoping the next leasing plan can focus on offshore wind instead of oil.

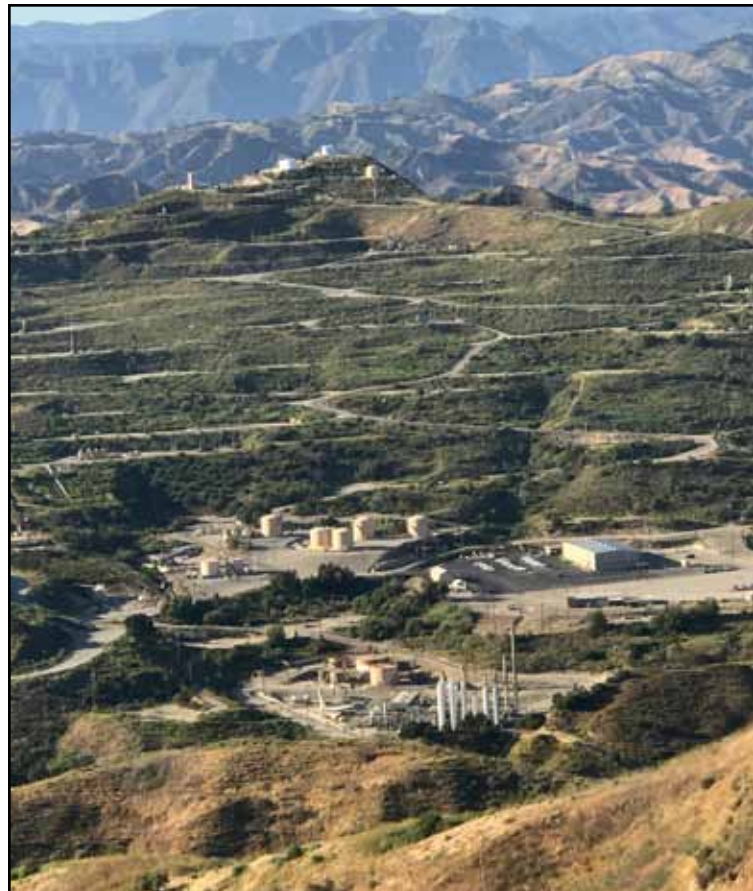
Legal Threat

Meanwhile, in Ventura County Supervisors will have to decide what to do about the signature gathering effort to overturn environmental review of oil projects. That needed oversight will likely be suspended until an election can be held.

Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter signed onto a letter documenting the lies told by signature gatherers, which merit investigation. In addition, seven lawsuits have been filed against the Ventura County General Plan oil regulations designed to protect people by setting a 1500-foot health and safety buffer between homes and drilling rigs. This pattern of scorched earth litigation by fossil fuel interests is aimed at punishing local CA governments for taking climate action or doing their job to protect people's health and is an attempt to scare other CA governments from taking similar action.

These oil companies are a public health menace and a drain on our public coffers. Trying to hold

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Aera Energy's facility behind the hills along Ventura Avenue. Major issues on oil in Ventura County now revolve around whether or not new wells should be subject to more environmental review. (Photo by John Hankins)

Condor Call

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Photos, news, tips always welcome!

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Typography and production by Dan Fuller

30 x 30 plan affects region

By Jim Hines

People have responded to an email I sent on Jan. 1 asking me what the 30X30 conservation plan means for the Los Padres Chapter region.

A lot

First off, it's a global initiative to conserve at least 30% of land and ocean by 2030 to help to confront the threats of climate change and biodiversity loss.

President Biden issued an executive order on Jan. 27 signing onto the concept, now the new Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, will issue secretarial orders to put in place a whole set of actions to protect endangered species on federal lands and waters. Their orders will also limit fossil fuel development and mining.

Congress will also be involved in the 30X30 conservation plan. Examples include likely approval of Rep. Adam Schiff's Rim of the Valley Corridor Protection Act, which will add a new and unique unit to America's National Park System protecting the mountains encircling the San Fernando, La Crescenta, Santa Clarita, Simi, and Conejo Valleys, notably expanding the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

Another example is Rep. Salud Carbajal's Central Coast Heritage Protection Act which does not add any new lands to the Los Padres NF but will ensure that fragile ecosystems within the forest and Carrizo Plain National Monument are protected if it is signed into law in 2021.

We also expect the Biden Administration will designate a new

ocean preserve off our coast, the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy will take the lead in the eastern portion of Ventura County along with the National Park Service which will see increased funding for land acquisitions of critical habitat and ecosystem lands. We have been told that Interior Secretary Haaland is committed to requesting \$6.5 million in land acquisition for the Santa Monicas.

Also, if everything goes as planned in April 2021 the state of California will designate Mountain Lion populations in southern California as endangered and thousands of acres of lands which are critical to lion survival will be protected.

I spoke with Governor Newsom's staff recently and it looks like we will get state bond monies to acquire a critical piece of wildlife corridor land in the Lower Malibu Creek Watershed. This 150-acre parcel was planned for luxury estates and is currently owned by famed U2 rock guitarist David Evans AKA the Edge.

Since my email went out to about 6000 recipients, several city council members and county supervisors have asked how they can help in this effort at the local level.

The 30X30 plan will be a cooperative effort by land conservancies, local, state and federal agencies all driven by the reality of climate change and its impacts on our planet.

Ojai team workin'

The club's Ojai Valley Activist Team finished out 2020 with great victories such as banning commercial agricultural spraying within 2 miles of residential and commercial properties, got the Ojai City Council to pass a Reach Code for electrifying buildings, worked to stop a proposed uranium mine north of Lake Casitas and worked to make the Ojai Valley "plastic free",

For new goals this year, we are now talking about producing a movie on the work of Ojai Valley environmental leaders and keep on working to make the Ojai Valley

fossil free by '23. Our activist team will also be gathering local support for the 30 x 30 Sierra Club Conservation Plan, which is a goal to protect 30 percent of our lands by 2030.

The Chumash Tribal Elders on our team will continue to work on First Nations advocacy issues and we will begin construction to create the first climate park which will be located behind Ojai City Hall.

~ Jim Hines

Energy Rap...

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on to our oily past as we transition to cleaner energy is also a bad bet. Exxon's stock has fallen so far it got booted off the Dow Jones last year.

Clean Energy Advances

Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) rolled out in north Santa Barbara County in January, providing cost competition and cleaner energy goals than PG&E. 3CE hopes to provide 100% renewable energy to its customers by 2030 and to reinvest its profits in local clean energy solutions. 3CE will roll out in Goleta, Carpinteria and unincorporated Santa Barbara County served by SCE in October 2021.

The City of Santa Barbara will be offering its own community choice energy program. The Santa Barbara city council also voted unanimously in January in favor of implementing an all-electric building code (see story on pg ?).

Ventura County has been served by the Clean Power Alliance since February 2019. It is a community choice energy program like 3CE.



Some of our Conejo Group are still getting out in the beauty of nature, maintaining distance and other protocols. On New Year's Day Hugh Warren, the Conejo Group Chair, was found at the lower end of the Lichen Trail in the Western Plateau area of Thousand Oaks. (Photo by Ellen Sanders)

Conejo Group elects officers

The Conejo Group met on Jan. 21 via Zoom to certify the election of Executive Committee members and elected the following officers

SB does too

The Santa Barbara Group met on Jan. 5 via Zoom to certify the election of Executive Committee members and elected the following officers for 2021:

Katie Davis (Chair), Luz Reyes-Martin (vice-chair), Emily Engel (Secretary), Jim Taylor (Treasurer), Martha Sadler (Programs Chair), Kate Mullin (Conservation Chair), Alex Pujó (Political Chair), Robert Bernstein (Transportation Chair) and Kristi KirkPatrick (Outings Chair).

See Group News box for ways to follow and communicate with the Santa Barbara Group, which covers the South Coast, Goleta to Carpinteria.

for 2021:

Hugh Warren (Chair), John Holroyd (vice-chair), Marcey Pascual (Secretary), Stephanie Scher (Treasurer) and Outings Chair Gerard Lynham.

In addition, Joanne Sulkoske, Niki Stokols, Elizabeth MacGovern and Ellen Sanders serve as members at large. Betty Eiseman is Membership Chair.

The Conejo Group keeps as active as conditions allow due to the pandemic and the Sierra Club's suspension of public outings. See Group News below for ways to follow and communicate with the Conejo Group.

THANKS DONORS

Thank you to our 2020 year-end donors – Together we raised over \$10,000!

Your commitment makes it possible for the Los Padres Chapter to be nimble and respond where we are needed, when we are needed – from advocating for renewables like the Strauss Wind Project to advocating nationally for the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act.

The year 2021 is critical for our chapter, not only due to climate change, but also to repair and continue the fight to protect our wildlands and wildlife by stopping drilling and fracking, engaging new voices, and much more during a horrendous pandemic as we forge ahead in our ever-changing world.

Look for our latest letter in your mailbox for our annual March Appeal and show your support with a one-time gift or by becoming a member of our monthly Sustaining Member Circle today (these are not tax-deductible). Donate anytime: www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000

For tax deductible donation, go through your Donor Advised Funds to the "Sierra Club Foundation," and indicate "Los Padres Chapter" under the Use field. Or, you can send a tax-deductible donation via checks payable to the Sierra Club Foundation, noting "Los Padres Chapter" in the memo field, and mailing to: Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter P. O. Box 31241 Santa Barbara, CA 93130

Investments of any size directly support our efforts in conservation, education, and advocacy.

Thank you for your support!

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



Condor John recently became a Sierra Club Wilderness Guardian and this is what he got: really good Swiss Army-like knife and smaller knife for keychain. It boosts your club membership with such extras as members-only ecotour opportunities, discounts on products and special access to webinars, calls, and events with conservation leaders. Go here to sign up: <https://tinyurl.com/WildernessGuardian>

ORMOND BEACH

Abundance of birds right here

(Editor's note: The article focuses on Ormond Beach, a site of importance per Audubon. But it is also relevant in both our Chapter's Ventura and Santa Barbara counties which, according to the annual Bird Count, are very high on the list of bird populations and diversity nationwide. The annual Great Backyard Bird Count this year is Feb. 12-15. Anyone can participate, for details, go to:

www.BirdCount.org

By Joan Tharp

Grab your binoculars, favorite bird guide or app, and spend a few hours exploring Ormond Beach--and winter is a great time to look.

From the shoreline to the dunes and wetlands, Ormond is home to over 200 species of birds. Some are full-time residents, and some just stop for a brief period during migration. Many are endangered, threatened, or their numbers are in decline, which makes the preservation of Ormond beach and wetlands so critical.



Great Blue Heron along the wetlands. (Photo by Joan Tharp)

SIGHTINGS

We're in the news and on the zooms

By John Hankins

We're still out of sight as to face-to-face meetings, hikes, and the like, but the Sierra Club does not lie idle. It's just migrated more to internet meetings, action posts and lobbying by email and phone.

A lot has been done anyway and progress for the environment is better than it has been during the last four years. Check out what we've been up to in just the last few months.

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, 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 pass go, but go directly to:

www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000



Condor John recently went to Recycle Lane after religiously collecting hundreds of plastic bags, but Ventura is not recycling them anymore and he was advised to just put them in the trash. NO! Ventura Sierra Club is fighting back to reduce plastics, as is the whole Sierra Club . . . join the campaign. (Photo by Condor John)

Follow the Friends on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/friendsformondbeach

Here are some of the birds you may see around the Ormond beach habitats.

ALONG THE BEACH:

- Seagulls; Western, California, Herring and Hermann's, to name a few. Seagulls don't develop adult plumage for 3-4 years, so while it may look like there are a lot of different species in a flock, it's likely a mix of ages as well as species.

- Willet, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Whimbrel,



Great Egrets on the fly. (Photo by Joan Tharp)

and Sanderlings all feed on the invertebrates along the waterline.

- Western Snowy Plovers and for a brief time in late summer, California Least Terns. The Royal Terns are visiting now.

- Black and Ruddy Turnstones can be seen feeding in the wrack (the seaweed that washes up onto the beach).

IN THE DUNES:

- Say's Phoebe, Savannah Sparrow, House Finch, Killdeer, American Pipit and the Horned Lark share space with the Western Snowy Plover and California Least Tern.

WETLANDS, SALT PANNE:

- White-tailed Kite and Loggerhead Shrike, as well as Peregrine Falcons, Harriers, various Hawks, and even Burrowing Owls.

LAGOON, CANALS:

- Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron and Green Heron.

- Brown Pelicans are commonly seen flying over the ocean and occasionally in the shallow part of the lagoon, which is where you will also see the American White Pelican in the fall and winter.

- Osprey, a seasonal visitor, can



Brown Pelicans are commonly seen flying over the ocean and occasionally in the shallow part of the lagoon. (Photo by Joan Tharp)

Impacts may limit oil

Rep. Salud Carbajal introduced the California Land Protection Act on Jan. 25 that would block new fracking or oil and gas drilling on federal lands on California's central and southern coasts if adverse impacts are found.

The bill is a direct response to the former Trump Administration's move last year to allow the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to pursue oil and gas leasing on over 1.2 million acres of California land, including San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Central Coast lawmakers Rep. Julia Brownley (CA-26) and Rep. Jimmy Panetta (CA-20) are original co-sponsors of the bill.

"The Central Coast boasts some of the most beautiful natural treasures in the country and pursuing fracking or oil and gas leasing on public land will only hurt our environment, public health, and recreation economy," Carbajal said. "Our public land is not for sale. I'm proud to partner with my Central Coast colleagues to

prevent the BLM from exploiting the California Land Protection Act on the environment to line the pockets of the oil industry."

Rep. Brownley also weighed in: "Good environmental stewardship is a core tenet of who we are as Ventura County residents. We have a responsibility to protect our lands for future generations and to prevent the exploitation and degradation of our natural resources."

The Act would prohibit BLM from authorizing future oil and gas leasing until the department publishes a comprehensive environmental impact statement to assess potential effects on climate change, air quality, water, wildlife, emissions, impacted communities—including low-income and indigenous communities, and communities of color—and more.

If the evaluation finds adverse impacts, BLM cannot move forward with new drilling and development.

To read the full text of the bill, go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/LandProtectionAct>

Jan 29: **Condors were sighted** (along with turkey vultures) above Sulphur Mountain in Ojai. Keith Chancey took a video and Perry Van Houten wrote a story about it in *Ojai Valley News*. "The last couple years, we have been seeing flights over the Sulphur Mountain ridgeline, and actually, some roosts above Casitas Springs are becoming more and more common," said Dave Meyer, a condor biologist with the Santa Barbara Zoo.

Jan 28: **E-bikes in the city** of Santa Barbara were rolled out by Trek's subsidiary BCycle. With about a 30-mile range, the system has lower prices for members and an hourly rate for non-members.

Jan 24: **"All Electric Future Will Reduce Emissions, Increase Housing Affordability,"** was the headline in *Noozhawk* by our Chapter Chair, Katie Davis. She was responding to "misleading, legally questionable spam texts by gas interests which have spread misinformation and was further amplified by Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Kristen Miller's Jan. 17 commentary, 'Santa Barbara City Council Should Focus on Economy, Not Overreach on Natural Gas Ban.' See our story on the Reach Code on pg 1.



Jan 19: **"We Did It!"** Alex Pujo reports that the Goleta Council voted unanimously to allocate funds to design and conduct a traffic analysis for the striping of Hollister Avenue in Old Town with bike lanes and two vehicular lanes. "With a bit of luck, we could see the striping done by the end of year. Congrats to everyone!" Note: SB Group's Robert Bernstein helped via his activism for bike transportation.

Jan 15: **Earth Justice** on behalf of the Sierra Club and other organizations filed suit in federal court to stop the Trump Administration from stopping protections for wolves in the U.S. Our own Jim Hines (Chapter Vice-chair) is a declarant in this case. Check it out: <https://tinyurl.com/WolfDelisting>

Jan 15: **Capital chat** with Rep. Salud Carbajal (who we endorsed) on the ordeal expected during inauguration week and beyond, and afterward our own SB Group's Alex Pujo providing an overview of possibilities and priorities for State Street development, arising from a charette. Sponsored by SB County Action Network as a South County Roundtable event.

Jan 12: **Two eco-minded** Ventura County Supervisors were put at top spots; Linda Parks was voted in as Chair and Carmen Ramirez as Vice-chair. Carmen has long enjoyed endorsements by our chapter at the Oxnard city level and now the county.

Jan 12: **Sierra Club, SBCAN, Food and Water Watch,** and 40+ other organizations are asking Santa Barbara City Council to support

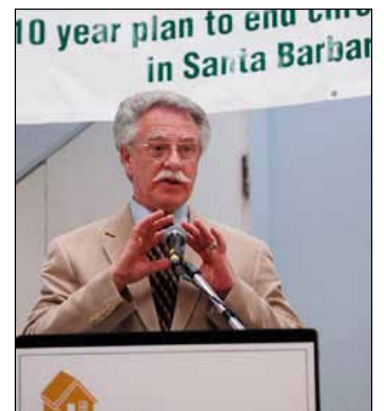
fossil-free new buildings by passing the proposed building electrification reach code. The code would require new buildings in the city to be all-electric -- improving indoor air quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and saving money on construction costs and utility bills.

Jan 11: **First Gov't Agency** in our region to embrace the 30 x 30 Conservation Plan (backed by our Sierra Club) was the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The Conservancy works to acquire and protect land in the Santa Monica Mtns. Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mtns of Ventura and LA counties.

Jan 10: **Quoted for Reach Code** story in the *SB News-Press*, excerpt: "Alex Pujo ... a member of SB County Board of Architectural Review and SB Sierra Club member, said he supports the idea of prohibiting gas in new construction, and said it's not that significant of a change. "Reach codes every year are getting more and more stringent," he said. "This is part of a trend. This is the way we're going. You can drag your feet, but this is the way the state and world are going."

He also countered the claims of the gas industry, saying that grid storage continues to get better and cheaper, and electric homes have great insulation. Pujo also referenced SoCal Edison's support of the change.

Dec 31: **Our Sierra Club** chapter mentioned in *Ventura County Star* article about supporting efforts for the voter registrar to reject petitions by the oil industry. An attorney wrote to the registrar about "fatal defects" and "misrepresentations" by people gathering signatures require him to reject both voter measures. Also, the petitions failed to include the full



John Buttny, activist extraordinaire, passed away in early December 2020.

text of the ordinances as required by elections law. The protest is led by Climate First: Replacing Oil & Gas (CFROG) which -- along with our chapter -- tried to persuade voters not to sign the petitions.

Dec 24: **Stop offshore oil** lease sales off the Pacific coast, a last gasp from the Trump Administration. Environmental Defense Center letter on the behalf of our Los Padres Chapter and Get Oil Out! will go to the Dept. of Interior opposing the effort. EDC has represented us earlier in the process. A similar oil lease sale for Alaska was basically a failure, showing little interest by major oil companies.

Dec 15: **John Buttny**, a tremendous worker for the environment and a steady Sierra Club friend, died at 82 from complications with Parkinson's Disease. An *Independent* article on Dec. 18 said, "Buttny managed to be both high-profile and behind-the-scenes, fighting growth and development in the Goleta Valley, slumlords in Isla Vista, and oil companies wherever he could find them." He was an administrative assistant to two of Santa Barbara's toughest environmental supervisors, Bill Wallace and Gail Marshall.

We're here: Electrics go viral

Plug-in electric vehicles are now viable for most lifestyles and budgets. With 60 models now commercially available and over 20 new models coming in 2021, over one million Americans have switched to driving electric.

"I switched a couple of years ago to a fully electric Hyundai Ioniq. It's a quiet, glide ride like all electric cars. I'm never going back to gas again; you could say I've passed gas," said Condor John Hankins, whose wife Suz got rid of "Janis" a Mercedes Benz diesel and now has a hybrid Toyota.

In addition to new and improved models, "this year will include at least four full size pickups. Many of us are

waiting with excitement to get in our EV truck and explore new places," said Kent Bullard, our chapter's Transportation Chair and a member of the EV Advocates of Ventura County.

"Range anxiety" has become a thing of the past as both new longer-range vehicles and many more charging locations have come on line. If you are a two-car family, one could be fully electric for short trips and commutes, the other a hybrid for long trips. The Hyundai mentioned above has a 140-mile range and is perfectly sufficient for tri-county trips while the hybrid is logging in at a 172-miles-per gallon equivalent. Fast chargers are popping up like poppies after a rain, as more hotels, shopping centers, parking

lots and destinations are providing charging stations; some of which are free to use.

"At public charging stations in the city of Ventura, it costs a dollar per hour which puts a 25-mile range into my electric car," Hankins said.

This is backed up by numbers; fueling a car with electricity costs roughly the same as if gas were \$1/gallon, thanks to EV's performance efficiency and the lower cost of electricity. Electricity prices are also far more stable than gasoline prices, allowing drivers to avoid the risk of future price spikes.

But most EV drivers charge their vehicles at home, with many also having solar for self-generation

Lease pause

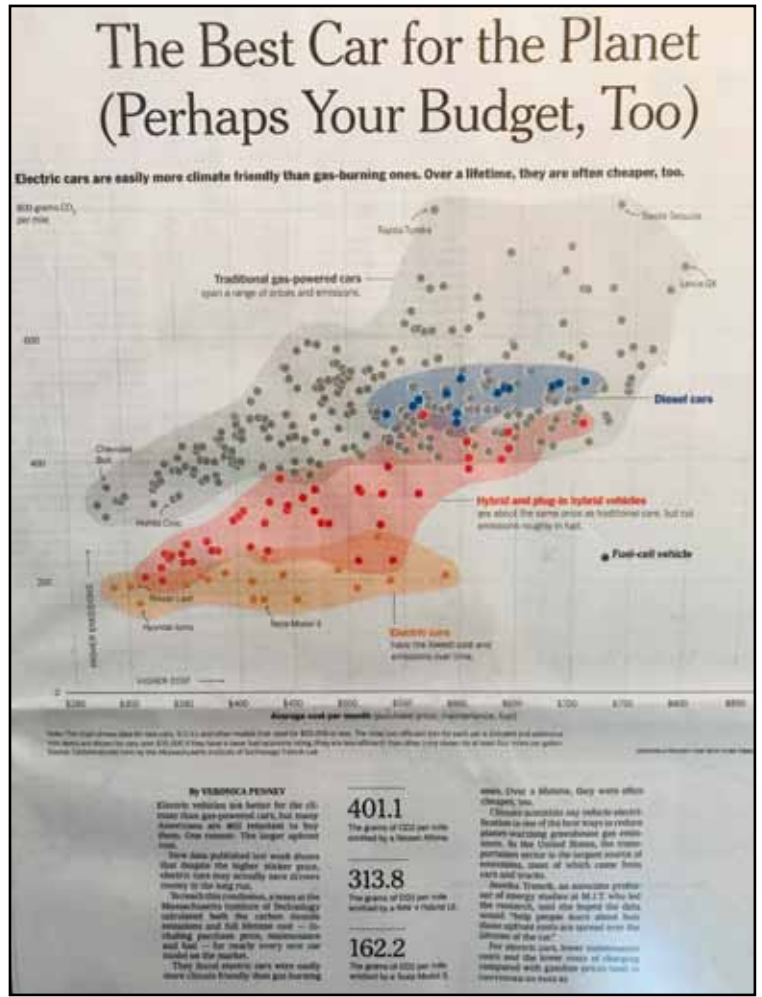
The Sierra Club has applauded the Biden administration announcing on Jan. 27 a pause on new oil and gas leasing on public lands and waters, which affects our Santa Barbara – Ventura region.

The order commences a review of existing leases and permits and looks to increase offshore wind renewable energy development.

In California, the announcement comes just one month after the Trump administration's Bureau of Land Management sold over 4000 acres in Kern County for oil drilling and fracking—the first oil and gas lease sale in over eight years.

"Oil and gas development on federal lands is already a major contributor to climate change. The Biden administration's ban is an important first step and should result in a permanent end to federal leasing," said Rebecca August of Los Padres ForestWatch and Chair of the Los Padres Chapter's Arguello Group.

"It's an exciting day!" said Jenny Binstock representing the National Sierra Club. "You'll see that while this halt doesn't apply to existing permitting for the parcels recently auctioned in Kern County, that is characterized as 'valid existing leases' -- the validity of which we are currently challenging in court."



New York Times' Veronica Penney compiled an excellent article on the future of electric cars. That future is NOW! Read the whole article here: <https://tinyurl.com/NYTbestcar>

Confronting our comfort zone

By Jon Ullman

Chapter Executive Director

By the time you read this, the trial of former President Trump will be upon us. I would be elated if 17 Senate Republicans muster enough courage to convict although I realize this is unlikely.

This may be because many Republican voters still believe Big Lies: That Trump won the election. That the virus isn't real. That masks aren't necessary. That the vaccine is worse than the virus. That there are no racial inequities. And that climate change is a hoax.

Big Lies are our greatest enemy. But Climate Denial is one Big Lie that could be called an Enormous Lie, a lie that will harm all living beings for hundreds of thousands of years. Fighting dangerous disinformation requires resolve, might and persistence. But it can be done.

Several years ago, some students at New College in Florida decided that they would attempt an intervention with fellow student Derek Black, son of the founder of the Stormfront website and godson of former KKK Grand Wizard David Duke. Derek himself had his own white supremacy radio show and nationalist website for kids. While most students wanted to isolate and ostracize him, others had, it turns out, a different idea. They'd invited him to Sabbath dinner. It took a lot of dinners, but he eventually condemned and spoke out against his family's dangerous ideology.

There are other examples. Actress Leah Remini left Scientology and dedicated herself to exposing the abuses. Last year, insiders and family members brought down the cult NXIVM, and its leader is behind bars for life. In all these cases, some sort of intervention took place.

While it's important to defeat Big Lies and take away power from those who spread them, it is essential to reintroduce the truth to followers too. In the case of climate change, that means someone who has access to the disbelievers must intervene and be persistent.

This won't be easy, but we can do it. Talk to people outside your comfort zone whether online, on the phone or socially distanced. Work with civic organizations to spread the word about climate change. Reach out to your family members who may have let ideology supersede science.

This is important work. If

most Republicans continue to see climate change as a hoax, we have a major problem. We can't just see-saw between dueling presidential administrations and congressional control. We don't have the time. We need to build a shared reality if we're going to survive.

Despite living in progressive California, there are large swaths of residents in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties who deny climate change outright or by degree, and resist efforts to reduce carbon. It could be ideologically or economically based. But we can't give up on them. Maybe it's through a social club. Maybe it's through a family member. Maybe it's through a religious leader. Maybe it's through media. Maybe a personal phone call.

It's hard, messy work. But the clock is ticking, and no challenge is too great an obstacle considering the stakes.



Our region is made for the outdoors, within January you could go kite surfing off the Isla Vista Bluffs (Photo by Robert Bernstein) or hike a snowy trail beyond Rose Valley (Photo by Pete Scifres). It's why our Sierra Club is so determined to protect our lands, please join us at: www.SierraClub.org/los-padres

HELP OTHERS BECOME EV DRIVERS

Have a positive impact in your community!

Ecology Action is Recruiting Volunteers to help us get cleaner vehicles on the road and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Get training and resources to help friends, family, and community members afford a new or used electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid.

Sign Up Today to Volunteer!

Learn more at mbeva.org

to further reduce costs. EVs never require a trip to the gas station and your hands will never smell like toxic petrochemicals. EVs have far fewer moving parts than gasoline cars. There's no engine, transmission, spark plugs, valves, fuel tank, tailpipe, distributor, starter, clutch, muffler, or catalytic converter. There are a lot fewer things to break down or service, so there are no oil changes and maintenance costs are much lower.

Plug-in vehicles offer a quiet, smooth and powerful ride. An electric motor provides full torque from a standstill and completely changes the experience of getting onto a fast-moving highway.

Despite continued improvement, too many people in the U.S. live where the air is unhealthy for them to breathe. EVs have no tailpipe and therefore no emissions – imagine how clean the air could be around you with everyone driving an EV!

EVs powered by the grid currently produce 54 percent less

(lifetime) carbon pollution than gasoline cars, which could grow to 71 percent by 2050 as our power supply gets cleaner. Even better, installing solar panels on your roof drops your car's carbon pollution close to zero. Wouldn't you rather get your fuel from your roof than ship it on tankers from halfway around the world?

Our addiction to imported oil has huge national security implications. The U.S. spends nearly a half billion dollars on foreign oil every day, mostly for transportation. Every time you fill up your car, you're sending a check to foreign countries to pay for their oil.

By the way, a new California executive order requires that "by 2035, all new cars and passenger trucks sold in California be zero-emission vehicles." Existing vehicles that run on fossil fuel would be allowed to keep operating.

Find out more, browse the electric cars (and hybrids) now available here: www.PlugInAmerica.org

CA bills analyzed

By Kathryn Phillips
Sierra Club California

Another two-year legislative session has begun and already, just weeks in, the unpredictable has become the norm.

The Capitol Building itself is closed to most and legislative hearings are conducted in a way that allows the public to call in to provide testimony and comment.

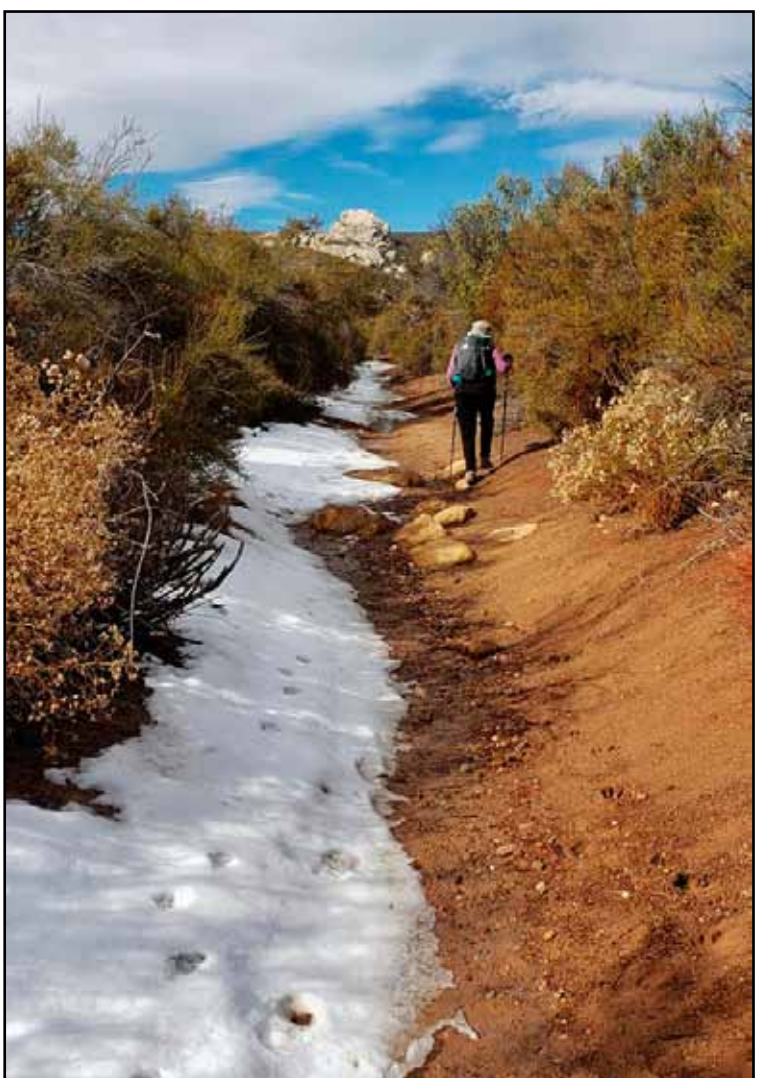
This year we expect to see a couple of bills that will put the oil and gas industry on edge. A handful of bills that would reduce the use of gas in new buildings, including new public buildings, have been introduced. The governor has proposed funding incentives

to help more rapidly move away from internal combustion engines in vehicles.

Also, we expect to see bills that try to determine how to better prepare for the effects of climate change, particularly sea level rise.

As bills are filed, our staff will research and analyze them, and develop suggested positions for our volunteer legislative committee. By mid-March, we will post a list of priority bills on our website at: www.sierraclub.org/california

If you want to track particular bills or learn more about a bill's status, the state has an excellent bill information system online at <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>





Panorama above Goleta by Robert Bernstein

LOS PADRES CHAPTER
 UPDATES: <https://www.sierraclub.org/lospadres>

OUTINGS NOTES

Sierra Club Local Outings

All Sierra Club local outings have been cancelled until further notice. Check the Los Padres Chapter website for updates to this policy at: www.SierraClub.org/LosPadres

You may find some private Meet-Up hikes that have a club member as an organizer; check pg. 3 listings in the Group News box. These are not sanctioned by the club, however.

A reminder that our popular Wilderness Basics Course will not happen this year because of pandemic restrictions. It usually happens in Feb/March each year; we are determined that the WBC will spring forth again, in spring of 2022. Just like new growth would in the wilderness.

Forest Areas Reopen

The Los Padres Forest is open except for certain winter or

rehabilitation closures.

Many of the campgrounds, day use areas and trailheads in the Lower Santa Ynez Recreation area of the Los Padres National Forest are now open. 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.

See the Conditions box below, it has all the contact numbers you may need to check your outdoor plans. Most information is at: www.fs.usda.gov/lpnf

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.

'People walk all over my best works'

Editor's note, Ron Webster died on Jan. 7; he was the prime mover and builder of the Backbone Trail.

The following are excerpts from "The Santa Monica Mountains Power Couple: Mary Ann and Ron Webster," by Maddy Crawford printed in Southern Sierra News in 2017.

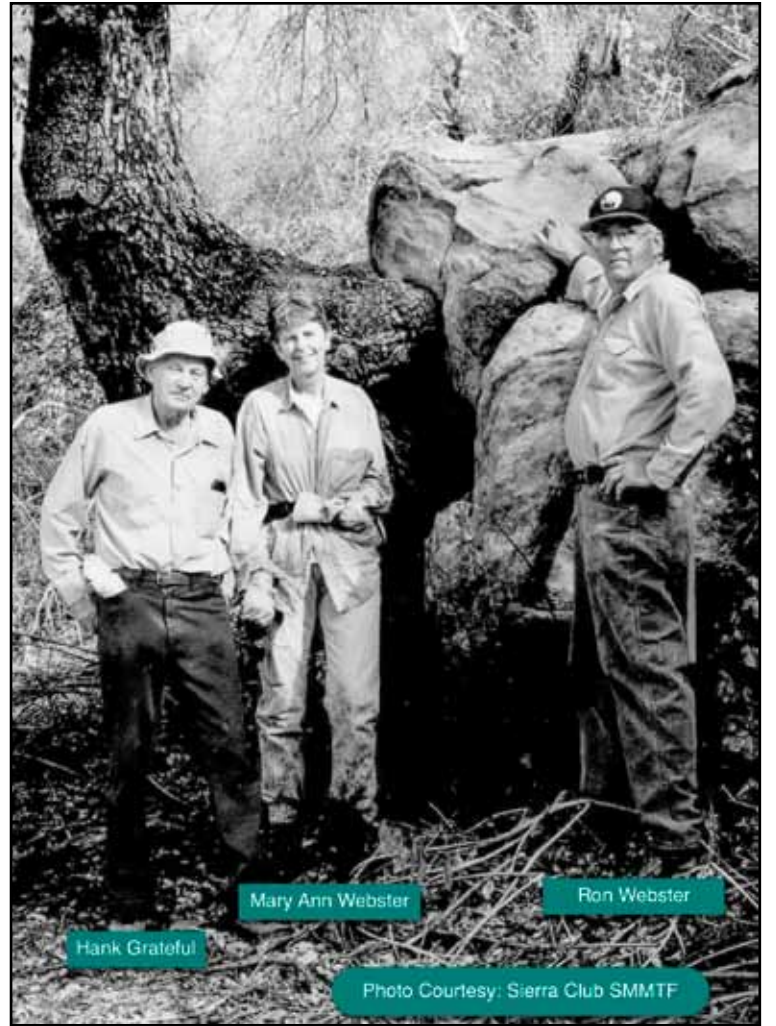
If you've set foot in the Santa Monica Mountains at least once in your life, you may have walked on a trail designed and created by Ron Webster. In fact, it's highly probable you have.

Ron, 83, and the Sierra Club's Santa Monica Mountains Task Force, have worked to make the mountains accessible in a long circuit of different trails that come together as the Backbone Trail. The 67-mile thru trail creates a nonstop route from Will Rogers State Park in L.A. to Pt. Mugu State Park in Ventura County.

In April (2017), Ron received a Lifetime Volunteer Achievement Award at the 2017 California Trails & Greenways Conference, nominated by officials at the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Then in May he and his wife, Mary Ann, received one of the Angeles Chapter's top honors, a Lifelong Service Plaque, for their collective work on conservation issues and trails.

"I don't believe in a lot," Ron says, "but one thing I believe in is [that] 'in wildness is the preservation of the world,'" he says, quoting Henry David Thoreau. The words perfectly describe Ron's mission and his success in making wildness and accessibility his life's work.

Ron and Mary Ann have been deeply involved in the Sierra Club for



decades, having received six awards from the local Chapter.

Their whole married life seems to be a loving personal partnership and a well-oiled working one as well. Ron coordinated trail plans with task force members; Mary Ann served as its chair and dealt with political threats to the land, issues that may be messier at times than trail building.

The idea came up to create a Santa Monica State Park, and a task force was created in 1972 to take people on hikes in the mountains to get them interested in protecting them. The monthly hikes led by Ron started

as "Sundays in the Santa Monicas" and were even broadcast on TV.

With no real training but deep environmental ethics, Ron has become a legend in his field, showing how motivation and passion can lead to a legacy. And among all the work Ron has done, he counts his proudest accomplishment as having succeeded in opening the mountains to people.

"You go through life," Mary Ann says. "And you contribute, or you don't contribute, but some of the things that Ron's done are going to last forever."



Send trail problems to LP Forest Association

If you come across any bad sections of trail, downed trees or slides, take pictures and post to Hike Los Padres and email the Forest Service or your favorite trail group - things change so quickly across the trails and any information you can share is always appreciated! Website is: www.HikeLosPadres.com

The Los Padres Forest Association's mission is to care for the Los Padres Forest, ensuring it

thrives and remains safe and open for the people to use and enjoy. LPFA volunteers work to keep trails open, report and assess forest conditions and provide public education on how to safely use the forest. If interested in becoming a member or volunteering, visit: www.lpforest.org

Surprising facts about the forest: there are 111 peaks throughout the LP forest, 174 springs, 206 dirt roads, 56 off-highway vehicle trails, 293 camps, 205 hiking trails and over a thousand cataloged locations. More info is at the Hike Los Padres website.



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>

Trips by Sierra Club

Sierra Club's popular trips nationally and internationally has a full 2021 trip roster ready for reservations. We're guessing you might be as eager to get outside as we are, and one of these itineraries could be the perfect way to get back into traveling when it's safe to do so.

Choose from backpack, base camp, international, lodge, service/volunteer, snow ... Go!

<https://tinyurl.com/ClubTrips2021>

Select from hundreds of classic and brand-new itineraries ranging from family and lodge-based trips to backcountry journeys, volunteer vacations, international treks, and loads more. We also have an expanded selection of specialty trips for beginners, LGBTQ+ people, teens, seniors, and women as well as a variety of trips for younger adults, which are subsidized to make joining these experiences easier than ever.

We're still closely monitoring the coronavirus pandemic and adapting our program to protect travelers and staff. Learn more about trip cancellations, our plans for future

trips, modified cancellation policies, and more in our Covid-19 Travel Update.

We will continue to keep you informed as the situation develops. If you have any questions, please contact us. We hope that you and your loved ones are staying healthy and safe and we can't wait to get back outdoors with you once things have stabilized.

One of the most popular trips are Adventures With a Cause; a lower price for those who want to do some environmental work with plenty of off-time for exploring.

It's all 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. Whether you're seeking lodge-based explorations or supported treks, backpack journeys leisurely to strenuous, or vacations near home or in far-flung destinations, you can be sure to find a trip that feels like it was designed for you.



They don't call it Rattlesnake Trail for nothing, and 'Trail-hacker' Anthony Biegen has peacefully encountered some; however, the coiled rattler was spied along the China Flats Trail by Pete Scifres. So yeah, they're natives.



Yes, a praying mantis is 'wildlife' and Melissa Baffa often displays such photos of the usually unseen critters behind the bush or in the tidepools on her Facebook page.

EVENTS

Feb 8: "Curb Cuts, Treating Stormwater as a Resource, not a nuisance," will open our eyes to new designs that would allow stormwater to flow into parkways or recharge. The free webinar is from noon to 1 by the Sweetwater Collaborative at: <http://sweetwatercollaborative.org/> You must register in advance here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxaj79xn>

Feb 9: California Wildlife Collection, a free Zoom event featuring pro photographer Brent Paull sponsored by the Ventura Audubon Society. Paull He has over 1400 publication credits of National Parks, refuges, monuments and more. To get the link, go the 'monthly speakers' listed at: www.VenturaAudubon.org

Feb 12: Sea Level Rise & Our Coasts presented by the Sierra Club at noon via Zoom. This is the club's first expert panel of the year on pressing ocean conservation issues. Learn more and register for free at: <https://tinyurl.com/OceanRiseEvent>

Feb 23: CEC's new direction, inspired by President Biden's "It's time to act" call. The SB Community Environmental Council has already been 'acting' since its creation after the notorious Platform A oil blowout in 1969. But now, its staff will outline new ambitious plans to build local leadership to advance Carbon Zero, Carbon Negative, and Climate Protection strategies to move rapidly and equitably toward a more resilient Central Coast. CEC is also relocating to 1219 State St., across from the Granada Theater. To join the event, go to: www.CEC.org

Club tracks dirty money

Editor's note: Part of this story is from Daniel Barad of Sierra Club California.

Sierra Club California last November launched the Dirty Dollars Project to investigate and report out campaign donations from fossil fuel interests and allies to California state legislators and the Governor.

Another edition is nearly ready, but the good news for the Los Padres Chapter is that two of our successful new politicians, Assembly member Steve Bennett, and State Senator Monique Limon can all boast zero dollars in contributions from oil and gas interests. "We expect their clean wallets to be an asset for the environment and public health policy in the coming session," Barad said.

Unfortunately, the finances of one Democrat who won in November produce anxiety. An oil-backed Political Action Committee (PAC) spent well over \$2 million on independent expenditures in support of Assembly member Carlos Villapudua and in opposition to his vanquished opponent Kathy Miller. Villapudua represents Assembly District 13 that includes the Stockton area.

All Republican legislators, newly elected and returning, also received dirty dollar campaign contributions.

There is much more to be discovered in the 78 spreadsheets that comprise the January Update of Sierra Club California's Dirty Dollar Report. Watch our website for its release: www.SierraClubCalifornia.org

Amanda Gorman wrote Earthrise poem



Earthrise from Apollo 8, the first manned mission to the moon, entered lunar orbit on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 1968. That evening, the astronauts held a live broadcast from lunar orbit. Command Module Pilot Jim Lovell said: "The vast loneliness is awe-inspiring and it makes you realize just what you have back there on Earth." They ended the broadcast with the crew taking turns reading from the book of Genesis. (Image Credit: NASA)

Editor's note: Amanda Gorman, the first Youth Poet Laureate of the United States, got rave reviews for her poem, "The Hill We Climb," delivered at the Jan. 20 inauguration of now-President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. She is also a compelling climate leader; as a couple dozen Santa Barbara and Ventura climate activists found out when they attended the Los Angeles Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training in August 2018. Amanda Gorman shared this inspiring poem from the stage, which you can also watch on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/xwOvBv8RLmo>

Our Purpose in Poetry: Or, Earthrise

Dedicated to Al Gore and The Climate Reality Project

On Christmas Eve, 1968, astronaut Bill Anders
Snapped a photo of the earth
As Apollo 8 orbited the moon.

Those three guys
Were surprised
To see from their eyes
Our planet looked like an earthrise
A blue orb hovering over the moon's gray horizon,
with deep oceans and silver skies.

It was our world's first glance at itself
Our first chance to see a shared reality,
A declared stance and a commonality;

A glimpse into our planet's mirror,
And as threats drew nearer,
Our own urgency became clearer,
As we realize that we hold nothing dearer
than this floating body we all call home.

We've known
That we're caught in the throes
Of climactic changes some say
Will just go away,
While some simply pray
To survive another day;
For it is the obscure, the oppressed, the poor,
Who when the disaster
Is declared done,
Still suffer more than anyone.

Climate change is the single greatest challenge of our time,

Of this, you're certainly aware.
It's saddening, but I cannot spare you
From knowing an inconvenient fact, because
It's getting the facts straight that gets us to act and not to wait.

So I tell you this not to scare you,
But to prepare you, to dare you
To dream a different reality,

Where despite disparities
We all care to protect this world,
This riddled blue marble, this little true marvel
To muster the verve and the nerve
To see how we can serve
Our planet. You don't need to be a politician
To make it your mission to conserve, to protect,
To preserve that one and only home
That is ours,
To use your unique power
To give next generations the planet they deserve.

We are demonstrating, creating, advocating

We heed this inconvenient truth, because we need to be anything but
lenient
With the future of our youth.

And while this is a training,
in sustaining the future of our planet,
There is no rehearsal. The time is
Now
Now
Now,
Because the reversal of harm,

And protection of a future so universal
Should be anything but controversial.

So, earth, pale blue dot
We will fail you not.

Just as we chose to go to the moon
We know it's never too soon
To choose hope.
We choose to do more than cope
With climate change
We choose to end it—
We refuse to lose.
Together we do this and more
Not because it's very easy or nice
But because it is necessary,
Because with every dawn we carry
the weight of the fate of this celestial body orbiting a star.
And as heavy as that weight sounded, it doesn't hold us down,
But it keeps us grounded, steady, ready,
Because an environmental movement of this size
Is simply another form of an earthrise.

To see it, close your eyes.
Visualize that all of us leaders in this room
and outside of these walls or in the halls, all
of us changemakers are in a spacecraft,
Floating like a silver raft
in space, and we see the face of our planet anew.
We relish the view;
We witness its round green and brilliant blue,
Which inspires us to ask deeply, wholly:
What can we do?
Open your eyes.
Know that the future of
this wise planet
Lies right in sight:
Right in all of us. Trust
this earth uprising.
All of us bring light to exciting solutions never tried before
For it is our hope that implores us, at our uncompromising core,
To keep rising up for an earth more than worth fighting for.



Did you know that you can include a donation of any amount on your CA tax form for the Protect Our Coast & Oceans Fund to support coastal education and conservation projects? Join me by visiting checkthecoast.org to learn more about how you can protect our oceans! (From Amanda Gorman's Facebook page)

GREETINGS FRIENDS

We hike on history

By Jim Hines

When I walk in the wild, I walk in the footsteps of history.

I walk on the same dirt footpaths today which my ancestors walked on in the 1840s in what is now the Los Padres National Forest and I am honored to be on their trails.

We have recently decided to honor this history at the start of some of our meetings acknowledging that the land we walk and live on is historically Chumash, their homeland for thousands of years, their homeland today and their homeland into the future.

I have walked on a trail in the Santa Monica Mountains which was walked on by early Spanish explorer Juan Bautista De Anza and have camped at the mouth of the Santa Clara River where De Anza looked out at the "great waters of the (Santa Barbara) channel."

I have camped on San Miguel Island, close to the burial site of the first explorer of California, Juan Cabrillo.

I gathered acorns as a kid in the same locations along Santa Ana Creek in the Ojai Valley where native American Chumash gathered acorns. I feel their spirit when I place my hand on a centuries old acorn grinding stone. Hands which were weathered ground acorns for food where today I place my soft hands.

I have panned for gold along Piru Creek (and found nothing) where gold prospectors in the 1860s panned and found small amounts of gold.

Chumash had a village on land which was next to my ancestor's ranch at what is now Lake Casitas. I walk among them, their spirits still live on this land, they have not disappeared for they are in another dimension, a dimension which I cannot see or enter.

Do I hear rustling in the brush as I hike in Matilija Canyon where the Spanish bandit Joaquin Murrieta had his camp? I do and there is no one around, there is no wind, there is only his spirit.

The work of the Sierra Club of protecting great wild places and fragile ecosystems also includes work to protect our history. The Sierra Club has supported legislation to establish state and national historic parks across our nation.

While it is so important for us as a society to learn about our past it is even more important for us as humans to touch our past, to walk with those who have walked before us.

To learn the history of the land is to not only learn about our past but also to learn about ourselves.

See you on an historic trail,
Jim

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Glimmers of hope for the outdoors

By Joel Pannell

No doubt, 2020 has been a challenging year for us all but it also saw glimmers of hope that could make 2021 a great year. This is especially true when it comes to protecting and expanding access to the outdoors. Let's take a look:

~ After four years of near-constant attacks on our public lands by the Trump administration, new leadership with a fresh vision for the outdoors is coming to Washington, notably by President Joe Biden nominating an experienced climate and environment team, including the first Indigenous woman to lead a cabinet department, Rep. Deb Haaland at the Department of the Interior.

This team will come into office able to build off a strong foundation of 2020 victories, especially for the Sierra Club's

Outdoors for All campaign.

~ In August, we saw the Great American Outdoors Act signed into law. It permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million annually and directs nearly \$10 billion over five years to address the massive backlog of unaddressed maintenance projects in our national parks and on public lands. About half of the funding will support conservation and parks projects at the regional, state, and local levels.

~ We also succeeded to further access to the outdoors as a human right. For too long, access to the outdoors has been treated as a nice thing to have, rather than as an essential need. The COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide uprisings for racial justice have made it clear that access to the outdoors is essential

to building healthy and strong individuals and communities. The Centers for Disease Control has recommended spending time outdoors both to slow the spread of the coronavirus and to boost mental and physical health.

Those benefits of nature are not equitably distributed, however. Land use policies steeped in racism and white supremacy have prevented Black

and Brown communities from accessing nearby green spaces.

~ While the pandemic scrapped many plans for getting out, the Outdoors for All campaign scored a major victory that will make it easier for youth and families to access public lands in 2021. In August, Every Kid Outdoors pass, which offers fourth graders and their families free access to public lands and waters, expired. Due to mobilizing thousands of activists in a matter of weeks, the administration completely reversed course. It is clear the outdoors can unify us.

We still have challenges to overcome, but the successes we saw for outdoor equity in 2020 show that the future is bright. The Outdoors for All campaign will continue working for that more just and equitable world. We hope you'll be right there with us. To get involved, go to:

www.sierraclub.org/outdoors-for-all

~ Joel Pannell is Associate Director of Sierra Club Outdoors.

EAVESDROPS

"The hottest decade on record is ending, with the last five years being the hottest since 1880. That means more years like 2020, with increasingly powerful hurricanes, more intense wildfires, less ice and longer heat waves."

~ NPR News, read the story here:

<https://tinyurl.com/2020Hiheat>

EAVESDROPS

"We may well be leaving to coming generations' debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes."

~ Pope Francis, who has a scientific background, in his encyclical about climate change. He wrote that "technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels — need to be progressively replaced without delay."



Resilience of our lands: Photo is after the Cave Fire and then five months later nature is recovering. (Photo by Bryant Baker, Los Padres ForestWatch)