

Vol. 21, No. 3 of 6

June - July 2021

Condor Call

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



© Photo by Alicia Marie Keys

Foothills ... Pg 1 Wildlife Champ ... Pg 3 Climate jobs ... Pg 4 Wind ... Pg 5 Outings ... Pgs 6, 7

JOIN THE CLUB - ONLY \$25 - FREE BAG - SIERRACLUB.ORG



Ventura Mayor Sofia Rubalcava speaks to citizens at Kellogg Park on April 24 who then marched a short way to Olive Street to protest SoCal Gas proposal to expand a compressor site across from an elementary school, on grounds it is too dangerous there. (Photo by John Hankins)



Saving SB foothills likely

It looks like an upswell of support is likely to save the 100-acre oak savannah west of the San Marcos Foothills.

A June 1 deadline was extended to June 9 to gain \$18.6 million, and the campaign is close.

Donations are still open (see website below) and hopes are high that the parcel will be saved as a preserve instead of a luxury home development. The site would be added to an adjoining 200-acre preserve if successful.

By virtue of its easy accessibility by both bus and bike, this natural space is also an invaluable resource for people and a diversity of wildlife including rabbits, hawks, owls, and bobcats. Also, band of coyotes can be regularly seen and heard.

Donations to the Foothills Forever Campaign is run through Santa Barbara Foundation. If the funds fell short, donations over \$250 would be returned; under \$250 would be used for the adjacent preserve.

Supporters who gave over a million dollars included the Allemall Foundation and Judy and Jack Stapelmann, anonymous and another anonymous donation of \$5 million near the deadline – from a long-time local businesswoman – brought it close.

Our Sierra Club donated, as did individual members.

EAVESDROPS

"An utterly crushing day for Big Oil: Chevron investors demand emission cuts, Dutch court tells Shell to cut emissions by half and Exxon shareholders buck the company and elect directors demanding climate action."

~ Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, tweeting on May 27 about "game changing" news. On Rachel Maddow's show that night, he noted, "A decade of battering away by activists is finally, finally taking a real toll ... an awfully good sign that we need to keep fighting."

But the list of other supporters is exceptionally long, such as The Land Trust of SB County, SB Museum of Natural History and Botanic Garden, Wildling Museum, SB Audubon, Lotusland, The Fund for Santa Barbara and more, along with hundreds of individual donors.

Due to the grassland's cultural significance, Chumash

youth, with many young allies, led the successful effort to literally halt the bulldozers, which led to negotiations with the landowner and developer, who gave the Save San Marcos Foothills coalition three months to raise \$18.6 million to buy the land.

To donate, go to: www.foothillsforever.org



Venturans insist on gas plan review

By Jon Ullman

The Ventura City Council passed a resolution to ask the state to do more environmental study of the SoCalGas cleanup and expansion proposal located at 1555 N. Olive St. on Ventura's west side.

Although the May 10 item was on the "consent agenda" -- a blanket vote where things usually are not even talked about -- it was by far the most commented on and visible issue of the night.

There were hundreds of written comments.

There were about a dozen speakers who commented from a computer and camera set up at Bell Arts Factory in Ventura.

There were about a dozen

more who spoke from their own computers at home.

Several speakers spoke Spanish and had their speeches translated.

Many of the speakers were parents of children at EP Foster, which is across the street from the compressor site.

One speaker, Laura Gulovsen, 89 years old, is a retired teacher from the school from the 1960s through the 1990s who had responded to one of our Sierra Club emails. She testified publicly that she and her students and co-teachers commonly smelled and inhaled the fumes.

Another was the Patagonia

continued on page 2

Coastal Appointment

The empty seat on the California Coastal Commission that is reserved for an elected official in the south-central coast region was given to Meagan Harmon, a Santa Barbara city council member, via an appointment by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Harmon, 34, has served on the city council since 2019 and works as an Associate at Hepner & Myers LLP since 2020.

There were four others vying for the post: Gabriela Basua,

Oxnard city council, Santa Barbara County Supervisor Das Williams, Vianey Lopez, Oxnard city council member and district manager to State Sen. Monique Limón, and Linda Parks, Ventura Supervisor.

Harmon was first appointed to fill a council vacancy in 2019. On the commission, she will represent San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

She grew up in Lompoc, went to college at Wellesley, Harvard and New York University. "Hard knock" education followed in Afghanistan for a German emergency aid non-profit.

She met her husband Nick in New York and came to Los Angeles and then Santa Barbara with their daughter Maura. Her mentor became Dave Davis of Santa Barbara when they met during Earth Day 2019. Davis was impressed with her background, work ethic and democratic politics. Davis is active with the Santa Barbara EDC and CEC.



Meagan Harmon

With your help we'll reach the 30 x 30 goal post

The eminent biologist E.O. Wilson has argued that to preserve biodiversity, we need to set aside half the planet for wild nature.

Now, conservation groups, including the Sierra Club, are laying out a road map to reach that "half Earth" goal, demanding that governments protect 30 percent of landscapes and seascapes by 2030.

Donate today to support our 30x30 conservation work in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

We can do our part locally to support the Sierra Club 30x30 Conservation Agenda.

Here are seven reasons your donation makes all the difference:

1 - Without your support, critical federal, state, and local legislation will not be passed, leaving our wildlands vulnerable to destruction, neglect, and development. Examples are plentiful via legislation put forward by our local leaders and lobbied by the Sierra Club, like the California Land Protection Act and Central Coast Heritage Protection Act, both sponsored by local Rep. Salud Carbajal.

2 - The urgency of climate change is glaring. Chapter advocates are in regular conversation with the Biden Administration, urging Secretary

Deb Haaland, Tom Vilsack, and others to reverse Trump Administration environmental rollbacks and move forward with increased environmental protection. After four million acres of California burned in 2020, we need climate action now!

3 - Stop Big Oil! Your contribution provides vital resources to Chapter staff and volunteers who are working diligently to ensure that oil companies are not allowed to increase local oil production, such as Exxon trying to restart oil drilling and sending 70 trucks of oil per day on the 101 freeway.

Meanwhile, Plains Pipeline (which was convicted of felony negligence) seeks to build an oil pipeline across sensitive rivers, parks, and public lands. Ventura oil interests are working to drill new wells using old oil permits without modern environmental review.

4 - Your dollars go directly to securing endangered species protections for mountain lions, condors, whales, and other precious wild life.

5 - Santa Barbara and other local cities are considering shifting to clean energy homes through all-electric buildings, vehicles

powered by the sun, and other renewables like wind supported by the chapter in the Lompoc area.

6 - From bike lanes to preserving local lands, Chapter volunteers and staff are advocating at city and county meetings to create opportunities for all of us to get outside safely.

7 - Your donation directly protects our precious local wildlands and wildlife. We also favor social justice and working toward opportunities for all of us to enjoy the outdoors.

Please donate whatever you can here: www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000

COVER PHOTO
San Marcos Foothills campaign used this photo to illustrate the beauty of the site. © Photo by Alicia Marie Keys

Venturans insist...

continued from page 1

environmental chief, Hans Cole, who testified against the expansion.

No one spoke in favor of SoCalGas.

Later, local activists, social and environmental groups met separately with representatives of the state's Public Utility Commission and Toxic cleanup agency, who have given the green light to this project with minimal oversight and public awareness.

This fight seems like it's about to get much bigger. At issue is the future of gas in California, how gas facilities are sited and regulated, how people are given public notice and if environmental justice and climate justice are just words on a paper or policies practiced by the state.

I have no idea how this will play out, but this journey has just begun.

The Sierra Club sent a letter supporting further review, asserting "this is a major, heavy industrial project -- building a new compressor station with twice the horsepower of the existing plant and removing the old plant -- next to an elementary school and in a residential area. Methane gas is

highly explosive and dangerous." Other excerpts include:

"This site was a methane super-emitter in 2017, which could have caused a mass incineration event. Further, they will not commit to an outdoor methane detector for their new plant that would catch a similar leak in the future! Nor do they have plans for alerting the neighborhood of gas releases."

"We also encourage the Ventura City Council to schedule consideration of an all-electric building reach code as over 40 cities in California have already done and Santa Barbara is about to do and Ventura County will be doing soon as well. It is less expensive to build without gas lines, and less expensive and healthier to live in a home with new, efficient, all-electric appliances."

Sierra Club's chapter chair, Katie Davis and Ventura Sierra Club's Liz Lamar were leaders on this issue, while Condor John attended the April 24 rally and took pictures.

For those who want to hear the meeting, go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/VtaGasHearing>

The first speaker after the city presentation is Laura Gulovsen, Sierra Club member and retired teacher mentioned above.



While other oil companies plan to remove oil platforms in the Santa Barbara Channel, Exxon is still fighting to reopen three of its platforms shut down after the Refugio oil spill on May 19, 2015 from a Plains pipeline. Since a pipeline is not available, Exxon wants permission to use trucks, a proposal strongly opposed by the Sierra Club, eco-groups, cities and counties. (c) Drew Bird Photography, www.DrewBirdPhoto.com

ENERGY RAP

Net zero future depends on...

By Katie Davis

Global Reckoning

The world needs to stop approving new coal plants and oil and gas fields immediately, shift to electric heat pumps in buildings by 2025, and phase out sales of new gas cars by 2035 to meet international climate goals. That's the latest word from the International Energy Agency in a May report finding that it's a "narrow" but possible pathway to a net zero future for greenhouse gases.

Gas-Free Buildings

It's happening, as 44 cities in California have passed all-electric building codes to phase out gas in new buildings. Santa Barbara could be number 45, with a City Council vote expected in June.

All-electric construction is a win-win -- more affordable, healthier to live in, and essential to meet climate goals. Other jurisdictions in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties are eyeing a similar move, and the statewide building code is edging in that direction as well.

Ventura Compressor Mess

A decline in natural gas use in local buildings and power plants can't come soon enough for the city of Ventura, which voted unanimously on May 10 to ask state regulators to take another look at SoCalGas's plans to expand a potentially explosive compressor station next to an elementary school in West Ventura.

Identified as a polluted site by the Dept of Toxic Substances

Control and as a methane gas "super-emitter" by NASA in 2017, locals are fed up. Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter is part of the Westside Clean Air Coalition, a group demanding environmental review of the expansion project and consideration of clean energy alternatives.

Oily-versary

May 19 marked the 6-year anniversary of the 2015 Refugio oil spill. While the spill shut down our beaches and caused the deaths of hundreds of marine animals, the unusably corroded pipeline also shut down ExxonMobil's offshore oil production and oil processing facilities on the Gaviota coast ever since.

As these facilities had been the largest source of greenhouse gases, harmful PM2.5 and smog-forming VOCs in Santa Barbara County, we've all been breathing cleaner air ever since. Exxon doesn't want us to get too used to it. Hearings on restarting their oil rigs in the channel and trucking the oil on Highway 101 are scheduled for August 11 and 13. The extra hearing seems designed to accommodate all the expected opposition.

continued on page 3



Travelling music, families and numerous residents of Ventura's West Side rallied from Kellogg Park to 1555 N. Olive Street where SoCal Gas proposes an expanded compressor station near an elementary school. Residents formed the Westside Clean Air Coalition of which the chapter is part. (Photo by John Hankins) To keep apprised of the issue, go to: www.westsidecleanair.org

Stop solar grab AB-1139

Sierra Club California and Earthjustice is opposing AB 1139 (Gonzalez), as it fears the efforts to reform Net Energy Metering (NEM) lack the balance necessary to continue growing rooftop solar while addressing the issues with the existing NEM program.

While the organizations recognize the need to modify the NEM program to reduce cost impacts on nonparticipants, and to provide the direct benefits of renewable energy to more low- and moderate-income households, the bill's approach is too drastic.

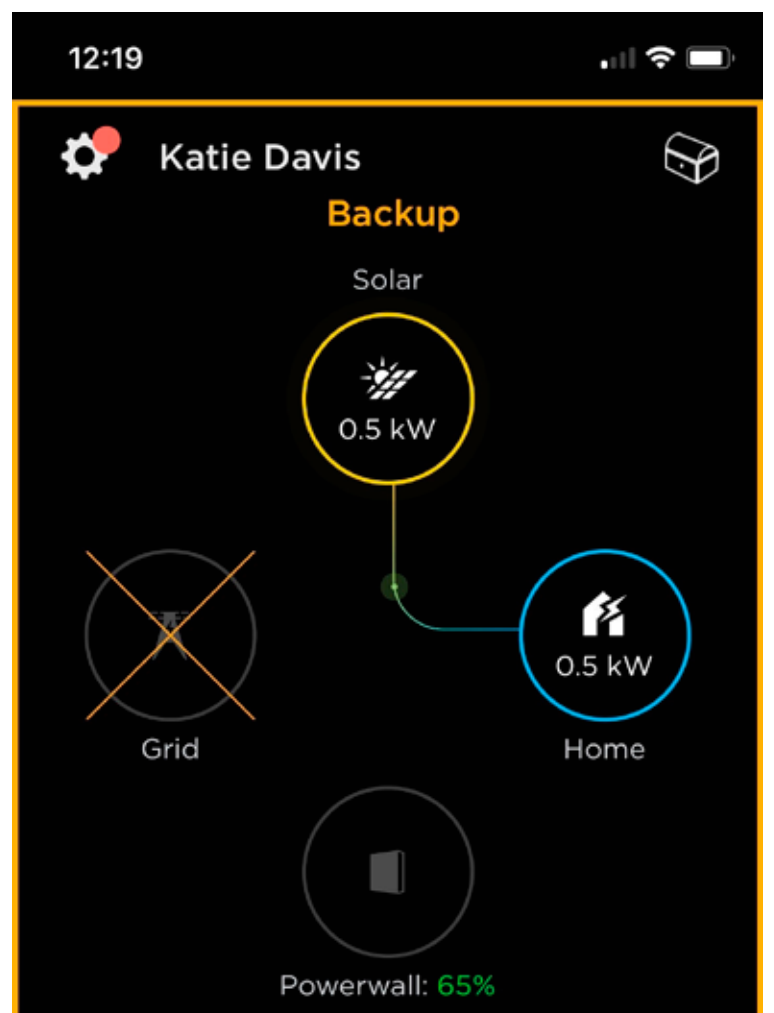
It will severely impact the rooftop solar industry by proposing compensation that severely undervalues established benefits of distributed generation, and eroding customer confidence in California's energy programs. Changes to NEM should look to promote electrification and energy storage. This bill fails to seriously advance equity and environmental benefits.

Meanwhile, the California Public Utilities Commission is poised to create a balanced NEM program through a robust stakeholder process. The CPUC proceeding is currently poised to balance the competing objectives and tradeoffs at issue in the NEM program, and the legislature should review the outcome of that proceeding before advancing a NEM bill.

"This legislation will devastate the solar community and industry and we need to work to prevent approval of this disastrous bill. It will not only hurt solar users, but it will also slow down our move to reduce carbon and mitigate climate

change," commented Kent Bullard our chapter's Transportation Chair and member of EV Advocates of Ventura County. "If enacted it will remove the incentives to install solar on residential, commercial and educational facilities."

For more information and an action toolkit, go to: www.SaveCaliforniaSolar.org



Our chapter chair Katie Davis and her family noted how they are "running on solar" during a blackout. The top circle shows the solar power, then into the house on the right while the bottom circle shows the battery backup is 65% full. (Photo by Katie Davis)

Condor Call
www.sierraclub.org/lospadres ~ All phone numbers 1-805 area code
EDITOR: 'Condor' John Hankins, 452-2885
 260 Pacos St. Ventura CA 93001 • John@gnusman.com
 ADVERTISING: Contact Editor (above)
 DEADLINES FOR ALL ISSUES:
 Copy Deadline: 20th — Advertising Deadline: 22nd of month preceding publication.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE:
 February/March, April/May, June/July, Aug/Sept, Oct/Nov, Dec/Jan
 SUBSCRIPTIONS: Free to members
 Non-members, \$15 per year. Contact Editor John Hankins

Photos, news, tips always welcome!

Sierra Club
SierraClub.org/Los-Padres
 • LOS PADRES CHAPTER •
 Post Office Box 31241, Santa Barbara, Ca 93130-1241
<https://www.sierraclub.org/lospadres>
 Santa Barbara 617-3106 • Ventura 988-0339
 Change of Address: address.changes@sierraclub.org or (415) 977-5653

NATIONAL OFFICE & MEMBER SERVICES: (415) 977-5500
 2101 Webster St. Suite 1300, Oakland CA 94612
 WASHINGTON LEGISLATIVE OFFICE: (202) 547-1141
 50 F Street, N.W., 8th Floor Washington, D.C., 20001

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jonathan.Ullman@SierraClub.org
 • EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE •
 Katie Davis (Chair): 451-4574, kdavis2468@gmail.com
 Jim Hines (Vice-Chair): 340-9266, jheasitas@gmail.com
 Gerry Ching (Secretary): 964-5411, gching@cox.net
 Richard Hunt (Treasurer): 966-4157, richardhunt@cox.net
 Alex Pujo (at large): 962-3578, alex@pujo.net
 David Gold (at-large): 642-7748 x6, davidgold4@aol.com
 Elisabeth Lamar (at large): 667-7617, elisabethlamar@hotmail.com
 Rebecca August (Arguello Group Rep): 350-0629, rebeccaagust@mac.com
 Hugh Warren (Conejo Group Rep): 341-6295, mail@hkwarren.net
 Martha Sadler (Santa Barbara Group Rep): 636-9194, marthasadler@yahoo.com

• GROUP CHAIRS •
 Arguello: Rebecca August 350-0629, rebeccaagust@mac.com
 Conejo: Hugh Warren, 341-6295, mail@hkwarren.net
 Santa Barbara: Katie Davis, 451-4574, kdavis2468@gmail.com
 Ventura Network: Elisabeth Lamar, 667-7617, elisabethlamar@hotmail.com

• CLUB SERVICES •
 Forest issues: Jim Hines, 340-9266, jheasitas@gmail.com
 Wilderness Basics Course: Teresa Norris, 524-7170, lospadreswbc@gmail.com
 Air Quality: Michael Stubblefield, 216-2630, motodata@roadrunner.com
 Conservation SB: Kate Mullin, mullin@shelter-vet.com
 Conservation Vta: Jim Hines, 340-9266, jheasitas@gmail.com
 Legal: David Gold, 642-7748 x6, davidgold4@aol.com
 Outings: Maureen Hernandez, moenandez@gmail.com
 Political SB: Alex Pujo, 962-3578, alex@pujo.net
 Political Vta: David Gold, 642-7748 x6, davidgold4@aol.com
 Transportation: Kent Bullard, 218-6945, KentBullard@yahoo.com

Typography and production by Dan Fuller



SIGHTINGS

We're acting up

Jobs and Climate connect

By Leah C. Stokes

Last year, President Biden and Vice President Harris ran and won on the boldest climate Presidential platform in history: pledging to spend at least \$2 trillion on climate investments, target 100% clean electricity by 2035, and to ensure that 40% of the benefits flowed towards disadvantaged communities to advance environmental justice.

The Biden Administration has made it clear that climate change is a top priority, following up with the American Jobs Plan, a proposal to spend between \$2-3 trillion on climate action. We now have an opportunity for Congress to put these plans into law.

The January elections in Georgia—when two Democrats won seats in the Senate, giving the Democrats an even number of senators with VP Harris a tie-breaker—were a profoundly positive outcome for the climate movement. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer has made it clear that climate change is his top priority.

In the coming months, Congress will likely take up the American Jobs Plan, negotiating a major climate bill. The last time

they did this was over a decade ago, during the debates over the Waxman-Markey bill in 2009. Although we have lost so much time in the interim, there are still reasons to hope that this new climate bill will be ambitious.

To cut carbon pollution across our economy, we need Congress to target changes in three big sectors: electricity, transportation, and homes. Together, they account for almost 70% of our total emissions, so cleaning them up would go a long way towards stopping the climate crisis.

The power sector is critical to making progress. If we have clean electricity, we can use it to power our cars, homes and even parts of heavy industry. Right now, the US power system is around 40% clean. We need Congress to pass a Clean Electricity Standard that would ensure we double our clean power this decade, hitting 80% by 2030.

We also need long-term extensions of key policies that have driven renewable energy progress today, including the Investment Tax Credit and the Production Tax Credit. Both policies must be included in the

final package.

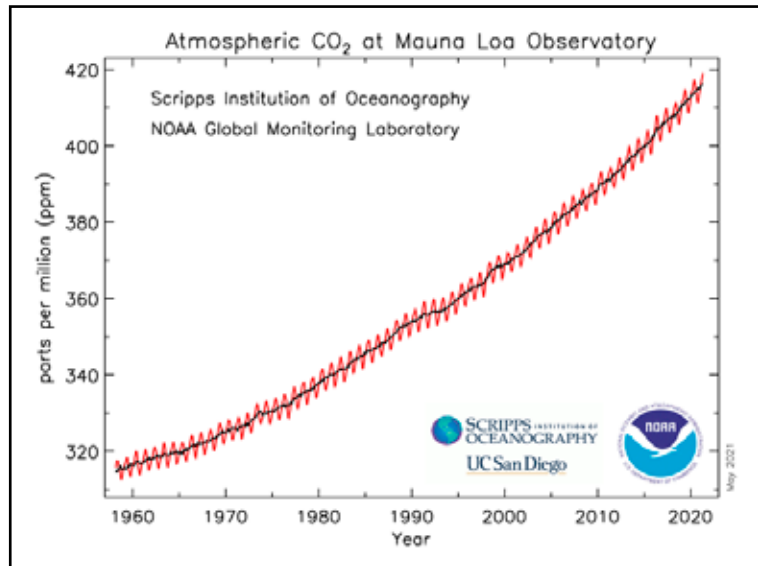
Cleaning up the transportation sector is particularly important for California, as it is our largest source of carbon pollution by far, since we have already made good progress on clean power. Policies may include rebates to help everyday Americans buy an electric vehicle, and big investments in charging stations from coast to coast. We should also expect lots of funding to electrify everything from school buses to public transit, and our postal service fleet.

Finally, buildings are a critical area where we must remove fossil fuels. For those living in Santa Barbara, you may have been following efforts to require that new buildings do not install fossil gas. This is a critical local fight, which mirrors changes we need to be making nationally.

Congress has an opportunity to make it more affordable to everyone to remove gas from their homes, through rebates for everything from heat pumps to induction stoves. These changes will not just cut pollution, they will make our homes safer. More and more research is coming out that shows that cooking over a gas stove is very harmful to our health, similar to secondhand smoke in the home.

The American Jobs Plan is the biggest opportunity we have ever had to act on the climate crisis. If you agree, get involved, and plug into Sierra Club efforts to ensure that Americans across the country are reaching out to Congress to let them know that we must pass this law.

~ Leah C. Stokes is an assistant professor working on climate and energy policy at UC Santa Barbara



14TH ANNUAL Ojai Wild!
A BENEFIT FOR LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH

JUNE 17, 2021
6:30-7:30PM
WWW.OJAIWILD.ORG

Join us for a virtual event to benefit our region's public lands and wildlife in the Los Padres National Forest

Over the years, Ojai WILD! has become a mainstay for our community. It's the longest-running conservation benefit in Ventura County.

In the spirit of this tradition, Los Padres ForestWatch is proud to bring everyone together for a virtual event again this year. Join us online as we raise support for one of our region's most effective conservation forces and help us lend a hand to local businesses and families in need.

THIS YEAR'S VIRTUAL EVENT INCLUDES

- Exciting Online Silent and Live Auction Packed Full of Unique Products and Experiences
- Video Presentations Featuring an Engaging Line Up of Speakers
- Musical Performances on the Ojai Wild! Digital Stage
- Sponsorship Opportunities for All Levels of Giving
- Every Sponsor Feeds a Family for One Month
- Food Deliveries Provided by our friends at HELP of Ojai
- Every Sponsor Receives a Free Digital Download of the Music from Ojai Wild 2021!
- Delicious Food Prepared by Seasons Catering along with Local Wine & Beer Available at Certain Sponsor Levels

OJAIWILD.ORG

Fun Fact

Fun Fact from the newly organized Conejo Climate Coalition:

www.conejoclimate.org

"Ventura County's average temperature has already increased 4.7F degrees (2.6C) since 1895, making ours the fastest warming county in the continental United States. That average is projected to climb 3-5F degrees more in inland areas, including Thousand Oaks, over the next 20 years according to the Western Regional Climate Center."

"We must act now to mitigate the worst effects of increased temperatures."

You can sign up for the CCC's newsletter on the website.

By John Hankins

It's going to happen, having our normal free, local public outings and in-person meetings after the pandemic. The latest word is local outings may open in July, but that's only tentative and past our deadline to announce for sure.

But open is the club's Adventures With a Cause which provides environmentally friendly outdoor adventures—from Tahoe to Tibet—for people of all ages, abilities, and interests. Prices are great, with big discounts for 'working vacations' which combine conservation work with lots of free time to roam. Check out these trips at:

<https://tinyurl.com/SClubOutings>

Please join our activities and activism; see Group News box on page 3 for contacts and links where you can get involved. We encourage all to go outside on your own or by MeetUp.

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

Here's what we've been up to since our last issue:

May 27: **Camarillo Airport** extension is opposed by our Chapter Executive Committee on grounds that it would threaten air quality, expand fossil fuels consumption and cause the loss of valuable farmland in Ventura county, especially on top of the proposal to expand the Port of Hueneme and the new Amazon Distribution Center Warehouse a half-mile from the airport.

May 25: **All-electric** building code for city of Santa Barbara was examined by Ordinance Committee to forward to city council in June. Our chapter urged members to support.

May 24: **Earth Friendly** Management Policy for Ojai is supported by our Sierra Club chapter in a letter drafted by Conservation Chair Jim Hines that read: "It is time for the city to stop the use of toxic, synthetic pesticide and herbicide products which endanger the health of Ojai residents." Check it out:

<https://tinyurl.com/OjaiEcoOrdinance>

May 15: **Climate Justice Network** of the Central Coast (of which the



New Conejo Climate Coalition is up and running at: www.ConejoClimate.org

COASTAL PROPERTIES
EXCEEDING YOUR REAL ESTATE EXPECTATIONS

We appreciate the Sierra Club!

1086 Coast Village Road, Santa Barbara, CA, 93108 DRE #01208634

Your terrific real estate team with 65 years and 420 sales of combined experience

- We recognize our fiduciary duty to represent your best interests from meeting to closing.
- We are experts in selling homes and apartments, and in 1031 Tax Deferred Exchanges.
- Serving Carpinteria, Montecito, Santa Barbara, Goleta, Hope Ranch, and Summerland.
- Proud to be members of many neighborhood groups and non-profits, like OMNI and MBA.
- 34 years living here in Santa Barbara on the beautiful Mesa.
- Your success is our success. Thank you to our clients and their referrals since 1982.

Interview us for your next transaction. Free consultations. www.sbre.com
Berni Bernstein: bernibernstein@hotmail.com | DRE #00870443
Kevin Young: 805 637 2048 | DRE #00834214

Sierra Club is a member) invited us to participate in the formation of a SB County Green New Deal via the Junta Grande virtual celebration, which spent over a year gathering information via face-to-face meetings.

May 10: **Call to Action** at Ventura City Council to protest expansion of SoCalGas compressor station that is next to an elementary school. Sierra Club advocates phasing it out or at the minimum a full environmental review. See story pg 1.

May 7: **Mt. Pinos logging** plan opposed by our chapter, which signed a letter by Los Padres ForestWatch asserting it is being proposed without an environmental analysis. Details here: www.LPFW.org

May 5: **Regional workshop** on the initial steps to implement Governor Newsom's Executive Order to protect 30 percent of California lands, waters, and oceans by 2030. Sierra Club sent out a notice to members noting we are uniquely positioned to provide input. So, we did.

April 30: **Luz Reyes-Martin** of our Santa Barbara Chapter and Barbara Ben-Horin were honored

continued to page 7

EVENTS

June 6: **Wilderness Spirit** award this year goes to Richard Salas, highlighting his amazing photography career under water and his advocacy for the ocean and its inhabitants. Given by the Wildling Museum, this virtual event, also a fundraiser, will be held at 4pm. Check it out at: www.WildlingMuseum.org

June 12-20: **Santa Cruz Trail** working vacation with Los Padres Forest Assn. Details at: www.LPForest.org

June 13: **Renew Part 2**, a Ventura Sierra Club Benefit encourages the public to attend and paint your own custom design (under an artist's guidance) on a t-shirt, bag or any other fabric. This will be an online zoom at 3pm, register here: www.Meetup.com/SierraClubVentura

June 17: **Capping ocean oil** wells in Summerland, a zoom webinar presentation with filmmaker Harry Rabin, noting the long history of leaking wellheads. Free, sponsored by Marie Morrisroe, but donations welcome. Presented by the SB Maritime Museum, register here: www.SBMM.org

Jun 17: **Ojai Wild!** Is the signature event and fundraiser for the Los Padres ForestWatch, an overachiever in protecting the Los Padres National Forest.

The pandemic requires it be a virtual event, complete with a live-stream celebration, live and silent auctions with a number of important speakers (see story pg 3). It will also give a portion to HELP of Ojai providing food to those in need. All details here: <https://ojaiwild.org>

June 27: **Looking Forward** award celebration and fundraiser by the SB County Action Network (SBCAN) online at 4pm. The progressive group advocates a holistic approach to sustainable community planning. Learn more or purchase tickets at: www.SBCAN.org

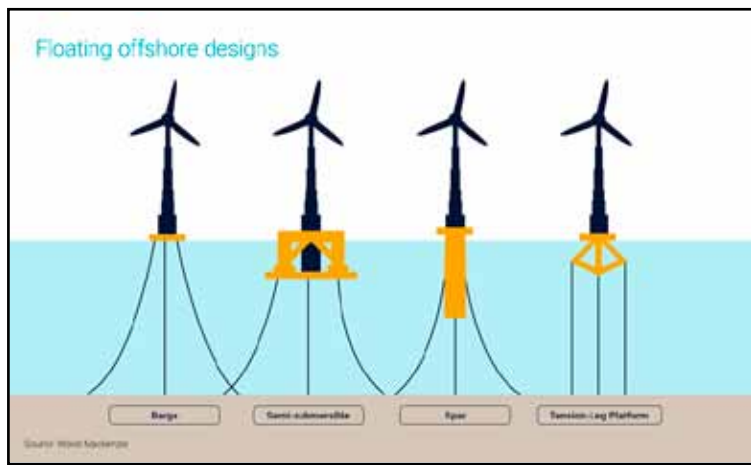


The Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant is expected to shut down in a few years, but its power may be replaced by floating wind turbines (some examples below) which can tap into the existing power grid. (Courtesy photo)

EAVESDROPS

"We've spent all this time, energy and political will battling to secure public access on our beaches, and now that access might literally be underwater in coming decades."

~ Charles Lester, former executive director of the California Coastal Commission, is revitalizing UC Santa Barbara's Ocean and Coastal Policy Center to carry forward work on pressing coastal management issues. Read the story here: <https://tinyurl.com/CoastsFuture>



Climate nothing like Covid

By Jon Ullman

Rush hour traffic. Indoor dining. Family road trips and exotic vacations. Shopping in person. Dinner parties. Baseball stadiums. Commercial real estate ventures. We're back to normal.

A world of motion. A world of smiling faces. A world of seeing loved ones.

This new world, just like the one before it, however, is brought to you by coal, oil and gas.

Don't get me wrong. We're happy to see normal. We need it. Still, something's still wrong, and it's not just the variants and lower-than-expected vaccination percentages. Anxiety looms. We're disoriented. We know that getting back to normal means continuing the trend lines of climate change and income inequality.

Can we take what we've experienced during COVID to change our planetary fate?

In some respects, COVID mirrors climate change. Both are global problems that can sicken and kill millions and if left unchecked grind society to a halt. Both can be solved, or at least mitigated, by changes in behavior and technology. Both have people who believe or deny their existence and support or oppose their remedies.

But in greater respects, Climate is nothing like COVID. A fire, a mega-hurricane or global temperature record cannot spur the COVID-like reflex-like response in early April 2020. Climate change is not tracked daily by the number of ICU beds and morgue trailers (at least now.) Just viewing the endlessly upward Mauna Loa carbon graph will not make billions of people one day stop everything and say, OMG, we have to do something immediately!

Last year's response to COVID gives us hope and terror.

We want a Green New Deal, called by its name or not. We want a new view of work that gives us the flexibility to use (hopefully, in the future) carbon-free video or travel to carbon-free buildings in carbon free vehicles. We want President Biden and his cabinet to write new rules and spend money to decouple our economy from fossil fuels. We want fossil fuel-friendly Senator Manchin (D-WV) to be offered multiple bridges and buildings named after him or whatever he pleases in return for his earth-surviving single swing vote. We want

to enjoy our work and homes, free from the gridlock, pollution and stress that defined our old lives.

In Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, we are trying to establish a better normal. We are fighting to keep oil companies from erasing the progress the Ventura Board of Supervisors made protecting our air and water in the last two years.

We are fighting for all-electric new buildings to be powered primarily by renewable power in the City of Santa Barbara and across our area.

We are joining grassroots and allies in fighting the environmental injustice of SoCalGas's compressor expansion and fast-tracked toxic soil remediation in Ventura's long-overburdened Westside neighborhood.

We are fighting ExxonMobil from expanding offshore drilling in Santa Barbara Channel. We are fighting land-based drillers, which want permission from the state and federal government to slice through our drought-parched aquifers.

We are fighting to buy more

public lands and provide protections for the ones we have on the coasts, foothills and mountains so we can achieve 30 percent protection (or more) by 2030 (or sooner), and we anticipate leading amazing hikes to wonderful natural places once again through our free Outings.

We are lucky to have many local governments in our region taking climate and justice seriously during and after the pandemic, but it's not enough. Climate is not like COVID. It never was. It's as the International Energy Agency said in its report recently: "perhaps the greatest challenge humankind has ever faced."

EAVESDROPS

"We were young, we were foolish, we were arrogant, but we were right."

~ Abbie Hoffman, one of the Chicago 7 defendants arrested for antiwar and anti-racist protests in 1968 during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

See SB wind webinar

The Environmental Defense Center hosted a special webinar in April about offshore wind being installed along the central coast, with EDC's Marine Conservation Program Director, Kristen Hislop and you can still view the short video.

As Kristen emphasized, "we want really aggressive renewable energy" as the time is now to transition from dirty fossil fuel extraction to clean renewable energy sources.

She walked us through the current push to include floating offshore wind in California's renewable energy portfolio, discussing the basic functionality of floating offshore wind turbines, impacts to marine life and other ocean users, and EDC's ongoing work to ensure projects are sited and designed to minimize these impacts.

Environmental concerns include collisions, entanglements, noise, displacement, ship strike, habitat impacts and onshore development. Mitigations are

possible, which the webinar addresses.

Here's the link to the webinar; feel free to share it: <https://tinyurl.com/WindOnOcean>

Blowing in the wind

By John Hankins

The Biden Administration announced an agreement to allow for offshore wind development miles off the Northern and Central coasts of California, affecting the Morro Bay and Humboldt areas.

These initial areas for offshore wind development could bring up to 4.6 GW of clean energy to the grid, enough to power 1.6 million homes, noted Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, who said "a clean energy future is within our grasp." Compare that to the current output of the Diablo Nuclear Power Plant at 2.2 GW, which is scheduled to shut down beginning in 2024.

Of course, the Sierra Club is energized. "As we look forward to a 100% renewable energy future, it's great to see progress in our region, both from the Lompoc onshore wind project under construction, and major strides being made toward ambitious offshore wind energy," said our Chapter Chair, Katie Davis.

Local Rep. Salud Carbajal said "offshore wind holds incredible promise as a means to tackle climate change while also creating economic opportunity, and the Central Coast is uniquely poised to reap the benefits ... the future is in renewable energy, and the Central Coast is leading the way."

The agreement, which identifies an area of development about 17-40 miles offshore of northern San Luis Obispo County, is the product of negotiations conducted by Rep. Carbajal's Offshore Wind Working Group, created in 2019.

For years a long-running stalemate with the Department of Defense hampered efforts allowing offshore structures, on grounds that they might conflict with the military's training and strategic operations. But a compromise to identify a 399 square mile area off Morro Bay and a section off of Northern California was a breakthrough. Defense now supports the idea. Colin Kahl, undersecretary of defense for policy, said "It's our view that the world faces a grave and growing climate crisis."

"Developing offshore wind to produce clean, renewable energy could be a game changer to achieving California's clean energy goals and addressing climate change - all while bolstering the economy and creating new jobs," Governor Gavin Newsom said. "This historic announcement ... represents the innovative approach we need for a clean energy economy that protects the

coast, fisheries, marine life, and Tribal and cultural resources we value so much as Californians."

When shut down, the Diablo Canyon Power Plant would end California's reliance on nuclear energy. However, the existing transmission infrastructure on the Central Coast "would be available to reliably deliver the output of both the Diablo Canyon Power Plant and the retired Morro Bay Power Plant," said Morro Bay Mayor John Headding.

The proposal would make it the largest floating offshore wind project in the United States. Too, Rep. Carbajal noted that offshore wind is one component of a multi-pronged strategy to transform the Central Coast into a renewable energy hub.

The Central Coast is already home to the California Valley Solar Ranch and Morro Bay could soon host the largest battery plant in the world. With the addition of an offshore wind project, the Central Coast is positioned to lead the country in renewable energy construction and output.

The plans favor floating wind turbines to avoid impacts to the ocean floor and both areas would likely require major onshore investments in expanding port facilities for construction and assembly. That would create numerous, well-paying jobs.

The federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) in partnership with California, will hold an Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force meeting on June 24 to discuss the identified areas off the north and central coasts. It is moving fast with a lease sale targeted for mid-2022 after an environmental analysis and consultation among stakeholders.

A commercial fishing industry spokesman, Mike Conroy said, "the fishing industry has been told these areas work best for offshore wind developers, but no one has asked us what areas would work for us."

More information on offshore wind development and other clean energy sources is available at: <http://www.doi.gov/priorities/clean-energy-future> <https://tinyurl.com/DOICleanEnergy>

For a local perspective, go to the Environmental Defense Center's recent workshop on offshore wind energy by its Marine Conservation Program Director, Kristen Hislop: <https://tinyurl.com/WindOnOcean>



Become a Member

As a Ventura Land Trust member, you'll join a community of people who love nature and support VLT's efforts to conserve open space, restore habitat, and offer environmental education programs that inspire the next generation of land stewards. **Goodness is growing - join today!**

- **EXPLORE** Experience protected lands on members-only guided outings.
- **LEARN** Members receive the *Outlook* newsletter twice a year.
- **PROTECT** VLT preserves are protected forever and open daily at no charge because of support from members like you.

\$45 | \$100 | \$250

GIVE MONTHLY

JOIN TODAY AT WWW.VENTURLANDTRUST.ORG





Take a Hike!

LOS PADRES CHAPTER

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

Panorama above Goleta by Robert Bernstein

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.

Forest Areas Reopen

The Los Padres Forest is open except for 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. 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.

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.

Fire danger alert

In response to the increasing potential for a wildland fire, Los Padres National Forest officials announced that fire restrictions will be raised throughout the Forest, affecting the use of campfires, stoves, smoking and internal combustion engines.

The increased restrictions will remain in effect until the end of fire season in late autumn. Details include:

~ No open fires, campfires or charcoal fires will be permitted outside of developed recreation sites

or designated Campfire Use Sites, even with a valid California Campfire Permit.

Lanterns and portable stoves using gas, jellied petroleum or pressurized liquid fuel will be permitted, but only with a valid California Campfire Permit, which are available free-of-charge on the Forest website. Forest visitors must clear all flammable material for five feet in all directions from their camp stove.

~ Smoking is prohibited, except within an enclosed vehicle, building, or a designated Campfire Use Site, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material.

~ Internal combustion engines may be operated only on roads or designated trails year-round.

~ Fireworks - even the "safe and sane" variety - are not permitted at any time or in any location within the Forest.

~ Recreational target shooting remains prohibited except for the two areas under special use permit: Winchester Canyon Gun Club and the Ojai Valley Gun Club.

For a list of Developed Recreation Sites and Campfire Use Sites or further information visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/LPNFinfo>

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	865-0416
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>

New Pothole trailhead opens

By Stephen Bryne

The Forest Service opened the new Pothole Trailhead on March 1, marking the official beginning of the Condor Trail, complete with plenty of paved parking and a pit toilet.

Caution, the actual trail is about ¼-mile north of the trailhead/parking. A sign is not yet up that will direct people to the trail.*

The trail is shown on the USGS Cobblestone Mountain 7.5-Minute quadrangle map (1995) and on Tom Harrison's excellent Sespe Wilderness Trail Map.

This area was the home of Juan Fustero, reported to be the last Piru Indian, and a historical marker to him is alongside the main road.

The general area was the homeland of the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians. The present-day Band originated in the lineages, villages, and culture of the pre-Mission period and is an independent nation, exercising its inherent sovereign authority over its tribal citizens and territory. For more information, go to:

www.tataviam-nsn.us

The word 'Piru' comes from the Tataviam word for the tule reed plant that they used for basket making which still grows along the shore of Lake Piru.

The Pothole Trail (Forest Service Trail # 18W04) is about 400-miles long, winding its way west and north to its terminus at Botchers Gap in Monterey County. Check out the trail's website at:

www.condortrail.com.

Named after the California



The historic Whitaker Cabin along the Pothole Trail. (Photo by Stephen Bryne), and Stephen inside. (Photo by Catherine Rossbach)

Condor, the Condor Trail is more of a concept than an actual trail at this writing. In the southern Los Padres, the route follows existing trails. That said, some of the trails, including the Agua Blanca Trail, are in somewhat desperate need of clearing and re-establishment.

From the Pothole Trail's start, the trail ascends a steep ridge, from 1120 feet above sea level to over 3000 feet. The views of the Piru Creek watershed and mountains to the northeast, including Whitaker Peak, are outstanding. Be warned that climbing some 2000 feet on an exposed slope is not an easy task. I would not recommend this hike during the summertime or anytime the temperatures are in the 80s or higher.

When I say 'exposed' I mean there is no shade, none. A nearby rocky peak, called Blue Point (elev. 2097) is to the north.



This peak was named for the bluish color of its rocks. To the northwest looms Cobblestone Mountain (elev. 6733), a peak that dominates the northeastern part of Ventura County.

Near the high point, the route crosses into the Sespe Wilderness. While motorcycles are allowed on the trail up to this point, they appear to be venturing into the wilderness all the way to the Agua Blanca Trail and beyond. I am hopeful that more foot traffic on this trail might lessen the motorcycle traffic. Hope springs eternal.

Another cautionary note: since the trail is somewhat overgrown with brush in the Wilderness, there are ticks that cling to the brush and may cling on to you. It's best to knock them off your clothes or body before they get embedded. Also check when you get home to make sure that none snuck by your initial defenses. Poison oak is also present but not terribly so.

After crossing the divide, the Pothole Trail descends toward the features that give the trail its name: The Pothole, the Devils Potrero, and Pothole Spring. Local author James Wapotich wrote about this trail in 2013 and he stated the Pothole area was formed by a large landslide that piled debris across the canyon, forming a large basin. He observed that the basin looks like a dry lakebed with some trees and willows. Indeed, the bright green vegetation of the cottonwood trees are in stark contrast to the surrounding dry and brown chaparral.



Devil's Gateway along the Pothole Trail. (Photo by Stephen Bryne)

EAVESDROPS

"It seems, if you drive to a hiking spot, your drive may be more dangerous than your hike."

~ David Goldstein writing in the *Ventura County Star* about the dangers of being in the backcountry, noting that during a recent year, six people died of snake bites, seven by spider bites, 54 from lightning strikes ... but 37,600 died from vehicle accidents.

HINES CHRONICLES

Trumpers still lurk in DC

Editor's note: By popular demand, we continue with the Jim Hines Chronicles, which reflects the emails by our premier lobbyist on the ins and outs of environmental activism. This covers the last two months. Jim is our chapter vice-chair and Conservation Chair and belongs to many wildlife groups.

By Jim Hines.

April 1: So many of you have been asking me about the status of relisting wolves. The Sierra Club lawsuit is working its way through the federal court system and we are advocating relisting wolves under the Endangered Species Act.

Also, we are losing SoCal mountain lions to rat poisons and vehicle collisions.

April 2: It was all about what the Sierra Club is doing to protect our region's wildlands, wildlife, clean water and clean air this morning as I spoke via Zoom to the Morning Breakfast meeting of the Rotary Club of Vandenberg Village.

April 14: Protecting wildlife and wild places in the western U.S. is filling my week. Just minutes ago, the CA Fish and Game Commission extended interim endangered species act protection for mountain lion populations; hearing on permanent status is coming up in Feb. 2022.

April is the month of my father's birth, the man who inspired me to

work to protect all which is WILD! In his honor I presented to the staff at the CA Dept of Natural Resources a list of lands in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties critical for protection under the state's 30 x 30 Conservation Plan.

April 15: Chief of Staff to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Haaland listened as I spoke to her about using the 30 x 30 Conservation Plan to reduce the threats to the seven federal lands managed by DOI along California's central coast.

April 17: Winning for Wildlife Week for me as a court date was set to hear my Sierra Club lawsuit against the Biden Administration to relist wolves in the U.S. and I gave several talks on wolves to wildlife groups in Idaho. Also talked to the LA Mayor's staff about the importance of protected wildlife connections and migration routes in an urban setting.

April 21: A gray whale calf was entangled in a commercial nylon longline net, and rescuers could not remove the net before night fall, so we do not know her fate. Via Channel Islands WILD! I met with Senator Feinstein's staff to finalize a bill to ban these deadly marine mammal killing nets off the Santa Barbara Channel, the only federal waters where these nets are still legal.

April 21: I'm exhausted from calling the state Capitol but not as exhausted as wolves running from hunters in Idaho will be as it is poised

to allow the slaughter of 90% of the state's wolf population. Will keep calling. I got some excuses but no action yet (from feds).

April 30: Many of you know I have taken part in anti-federal land extremist meetings and events over the past four years both locally, the western U.S. and in Washington DC because I like to know what my adversaries are doing.

These extremists are still active in the House and Senate and in various state houses.

May 3: A hectic morning mainly dealing with wolf issues, but I did take part in a Zoom event put on by local supporters of the Western Oil and Gas Association, American Petroleum Institute and COLAB members, and boy do they have plans for Ventura county.

In the coming months Ventura County will be ground zero for fossil fuel funds to be used to stop local elected officials who have not supported the fossil fuel industry. They also intend to get VC voters to pass two initiatives to scrap sensible regulations.

May 5: An alarming change is coming to Ventura county politics and it is not good for the environment. The oil industry is currently focusing energies on two recalls here, against Gov. Newsom and one of our great environmental friends, Supervisor Linda Parks. Look out for recall campaigns against Supervisors Matt Lavere and Carmen Ramirez, all Sierra Club endorsed candidates.

May 6: White House released the 'America The Beautiful Initiative', a vision for our nation outlining the policies of the 30 x 30 Conservation Plan. Here's a link: <https://tinyurl.com/DOI30x30>

May 9: Another wild week coming up for our work to protect all which is wild in the Los Padres region and for me beyond, notably regarding Santa Rosa Island as Vail and Vickers families are attempting to get their ranching operation back on the park island, and they may even get to run a bed and breakfast facility.

In contrast, Patagonia may help stop the wolf killings in the west.

May 10: While we got a dream team at the U.S. Dept of the Interior, the management team at the U.S. Forest Service is still President Trump's dream team. I am increasingly concerned ...

May 18: Virtual meeting with former President Trump's appointed leadership at the Forest Service headquarters in Washington DC (not yet replaced). There are plans to dramatically increase the amount of national forest lands which will be subject to forest thinning/logging projects like what is proposed on 600 acres north of Pine Mountain and on 1600 acres at Mt Pinos in the Los Padres NF.

This is all being done under the guise of the prediction of the worst fire season ever in the west.

May 26: President Biden said "I'm all in for protecting wolves" on a children's TV show, Brave Wilderness. He mentioned that his grandchildren have been asking him to protect wolves. Looks like all our work to protect wolves may come down to comments made by children.

May 28: Native American perspective on the 30 x 30 Conservation Plan as written by a local Chumash Elder: <https://tinyurl.com/Chumash30x30>



Service trip to Arches National Park in Utah, an example of national and international Sierra Club Outings. This is a base camp, not a backpacking trip and work may include removal of non-native vegetation, trail work and maintenance, no experience required. Trip is slated for Sept. 12-18 for only \$675. To see this and other locales, most of which are not service trips, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/SClubOutings>

We're acting up...

continued from page 4

as #WomenOfAchievement by the SB Chapter of Assn. for Women in Communications. Way to go Luz, we are so proud of you.

April 29: **First Edition** of the Conejo Climate Coalition Newsletter featured a push for all-electric buildings instead of gas, which pollutes. It quoted Rachel Golden of the Sierra Club's building electrification campaign: "There's no pathway to stabilizing the climate without phasing gas out of our homes and buildings. This is a must-do for the climate and a livable planet." Check them out here: www.ConejoClimate.org

April 29: **Native riparian wildlife**, in the soil, in the water, in the air, is making a comeback at the Sespe Cienega area along the Santa Clara River thanks to volunteers and Friends of the Santa Clara River. Ventura Sierra Club is part of the effort and treasures this resource in our midst. Check out Nina and Jim Danza's video here: <https://tinyurl.com/SCLaraRiverWork>

April 27: **Offshore Wind** along the Central Coast webinar by the Environmental Defense Center was attended by many of our Sierra Club members and officers. Webinar info still available here: <https://tinyurl.com/SeaWindWebinar>



Forest service proposal would cut thousands of mature trees across 1,600 acres in Mt. Pinos area (Photo by hiker Esther Chase). Our club opposes it; learn more at: www.LPFW.org

April 26: **EV Friendly** building codes fully supported by Sierra Club California, which would strengthen current codes making it easier for EV charging stations in new construction, notably aimed at apartments and condos. The club signed onto a letter to the CA Building Standards Commission, along with scores of other groups and thousands of individuals, including Condor John.

April 27: **Nature Based Solutions**, a state-wide virtual webinar sponsored by the CA Natural Resource Agency for public input on the 30 X 30 plan. Broken into regions, northern SB County was in the Central Coast region event and South Coast SB and Ventura County in the Los Angeles region. It refers to protecting 30% of the planet by 2030 and the Sierra Club is involved.

April 22-24: **Virtual Booth** for Earth Day courtesy of SB Community Environmental Council. Here's the link: <https://tinyurl.com/EDaybooth>

April 20: **Unanimous vote** by our chapter Executive Committee to retain Linda Parks by opposing a recall for this effective Ventura County Supervisor who "has been a key environmental leader in the key swing seat of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors for many years," noted our attorney, David Gold. The recall is based on her vote on Jan. 12 to initiate litigation against 18 businesses for repeated violations of state and county closure orders due to the Covid pandemic. Other supervisors who voted with Parks -- Matt LaVere, Kelly Long and Carmen Ramirez -- may also face a similar recall.

April 12: **#SkipTheStuff** campaign is a coalition to ditch plastic. Ventura Sierra Club is proposing we join the efforts as has SB Community Environmental Council, CoastKeepers and the GOOD Club. More info at: <https://upstreamsolutions.org/skip-the-stuff> SierraClubVentura@gmail.com

April 6: **Park donation** to the city of Guadalupe's LeRoy Park Renovation, via the Santa Maria Valley Community Foundation. The park, at 4689 11th St. over six acres, is undergoing a multi-million-dollar renovation that includes major upgrades to its community center. It is SB County's oldest community park, founded in 1871, and nurtured by Los Amigos de Guadalupe. Learn more at: <https://tinyurl.com/LeRoyPark>



Entrance leading to Fillmore Fish Hatchery where native plants are growing back, thanks to volunteers like Sierra Club's Nina Danza, adult and youth volunteers over the years. See April 29 'Sightings' item. (Photo courtesy of SantaClaraRiver.org)

A natural comeback

By Nina Danza

As you whiz along the 126, take a quick look as far as you can into the entry road at the Fish Hatchery near Fillmore. Don't blink or you'll miss seeing the location of a truly wonderful environmental success story.

The River upwells at the Fish Hatchery, but hundreds of acres of upper terrace land are located along the entry road. These acres were once farmed -- a row of pomegranate trees are still in place -- but are now mostly degraded with invasive plants and disconnected from the original floodplain ... except for the first acre of restored land.

Over the past few years River groups and volunteers have produced an ethnobotany trail with native species that would have been present pre-disturbance. The plants attract insects that in turn attract amphibians and birds and mammals. Additional acres are slated for restoration in coming years.

The 'Sespe Cienega Ecological Preserve' -- named as shown on historical maps -- has a great many backers. Funding for the first acre was

obtained by Friends of the Santa Clara River (FSCR.org) with research input from UCSB Marine Science Institute. Pre-pandemic, Sierra Club volunteers answered every call for work dates to plant, remove weeds, mulch and water the trail. Lee Mandell, a Ventura Sierra Club volunteer, produced and installed wood trail markers which identify plant species in a brochure.

CDFW wants the larger area to be restored, about 265 acres. The vision is to reconnect the river with its floodplain and restore the ecosystem. A careful, scientific feasibility study was prepared in 2021 for the enlargement and is online at <https://santaclarariver.org/sespe-cienega-planning-project/> Imagine going to see the print of a lion, hear the call of a hawk, smell the sagebrush throughout the year this close to home.

You can help make this site a treasure in our area. Watch a little bit of the project at the link below, and then sign up on our Meetup or at FSCR to find out when volunteers dates resume later this year.

<https://tinyurl.com/SCLaraRiverWork> www.FSCR.org

SIERRA CLUB
LOS PADRES CHAPTER
P.O. Box 31241
Santa Barbara, CA 93130-1241

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. Postage PAID
Santa Barbara, CA
Permit No. 9

GREETINGS FRIENDS

The Lion Kid

By Jim Hines

The kid and the lion ... sounds like something out of Narnia ... but for this kid and a mountain lion it was real.

My journey on a dirt road to meet a mountain lion started on a Spring day when I was 12 years old. It was a beautiful day and my wolf dog, Silver Dawn, and I decided to spend the day exploring as we often did along Coyote Creek, which was the western border of my family's ranch surrounding Lake Casitas.

The day started like many on the ranch, morning chores done and then time to explore. I told my parents that my dog Silver Dawn and I would be exploring along Santa Ana Creek. We exited the garden gate to a meeting with destiny.

The day was joyful, spent exploring, dipping in the water, laying under the fern grotto. Then time to take the 2-mile walk home.

A 20-foot-tall cliff was on the left side of the road and as we approached the top of the incline, Silver Dawn stopped and started barking and growling and looking up at the cliff. I looked up and saw a female mountain lion looking down upon us.



Male lion P-78, likely died from being hit by traffic, but it also tested positive for a rodenticide. On May 16 another lion was killed on Highway 101 at Gaviota, and a bear too. (Photo NPS)

What an amazing creature, her coat was so slick, her eyes glared, I was mesmerized and humbled to be so close to such a magnificent creature.

It seemed like many minutes that I had the glare of the cat but it was only seconds and then she bounded back into the bush.

It never dawned on me that Silver Dawn and I were in danger, for the big cat could have very easily jumped down upon us.

I was so excited that I was able to share a few seconds close with the big cat. I made a bond for a few seconds with something so beautiful and powerful. I truly felt thinking later that the cat we were not a threat and left us alone.

We hurried back to our home filled with excitement that a 12-year old can have; I shared my experience with my parents and talked about the encounter endlessly with everyone I came across the next few weeks.

My encounter with such a beautiful creature started a fire of passion within me which later in life I would use for the positive good of working to protect mountain lions. I started Mountain Lions FOREVER!, a Sierra Club campaign to protect the largest wild cats in California.

Mountain lions, cougars, play such an important role in our natural ecosystems and all too often the big cats are misinterpreted as being manhunters, which they're not.

That Spring day many years ago left an indelible mark on my spirit for I am one with the big cats and I speak for them, meet with decision makers about them, I am their voice.

~ For the lions, Jim



A charming beaver photo from Sierra magazine.

Bring back beavers

There are moves afoot to bring back beavers to our local creeks, and the Sierra Club is one of its advocates.

"When I was growing up my dad and I would often hike and horse pack into the Sespe Creek region and we saw beavers everywhere," said our Conservation Director and chapter vice-chair Jim Hines.

"But today there are no known beavers left in Ventura county waterways while there still are in Santa Barbara County waterways."

Hines found out that it is illegal to reintroduce beavers in California. "So, the Sierra Club California Wildlife Team is

starting a new campaign to get state policy makers to change that," he said.

A post in Wikipedia noted there is a picture of a beaver at Painted Rock in the Cuyama River watershed, there is a Chumash shaman's rain-making kit made from the skin of a beaver tail, Chumash tribes also had a beaver dance and there is a Beaver Campground on Sespe Creek.

Also, in the post are reports that a fire crew chief saw beaver dams above Beaver Camp in 1970 and Alasdair Coyne of Keep the Sespe Wild reports seeing a beaver dam at Willett Hot Springs in 2000.

In its latest issue, Sierra Magazine published an article entitled: "Beavers are Firefighters Who Work for Free" with the subhead, "Is it time to rethink beaver relocation bans?" Read it here:

<https://tinyurl.com/BringBackBeavers>

Also, Camarillo resident Dr. Emily Fairfax is quoted in the article and she will be working with the new team on this issue, Hines said.

EAVESDROPS

"They can tell the difference between an Apple and a Coke, but not a maple from an oak."

~ U.S. children spend only minutes outside playing per day versus over seven hours in front of a screen, concludes Jeff Opperman of World Wildlife Fund in the *LA Times*. While "nature themed words" are losing ground in pop culture, he sees a new trend by singer Taylor Swift whose lyrics "are filled with the language and images of the natural world."