

2021 Executive Committee Statements



Diane Trautman

I am running for the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee because I believe that we must focus on recruiting new members who reflect the full range of diversity in our region. We need to welcome and solicit new ideas and perspectives. We must also create opportunities that match the abilities and interests of volunteers. Then we need to give them the tools they need for effective volunteer work.

The Sierra Club is in a period of transition, which is a delicate balancing act for any organization. To survive and thrive, it's important that we remain open to new possibilities. As the Communications Committee continues to develop volunteer recruitment and onboarding, we must also focus on retention. Giving volunteers a better sense of how they can contribute to the success of the Sierra Club and creating clear processes will allow everyone to participate more effectively.

I have been doing this kind of work my entire career. Beyond my Sierra Club work, I am bringing people together to develop a shared housing program; advocating for the creation of council districts in Santa Clarita for better minority representation; and partnering with professionals in the mental health field to promote wellness and prevent suicides. The mental health resources card we developed is now widely distributed throughout our community to assist those in need.

As far back as my PTA-president and political/campaign days, I learned the value of bringing diverse voices together and encouraging volunteers to express their enthusiasm for the organization in ways that made the organization work better, accomplish more and change with the times.

I ask for your vote and thank you for your consideration.

Background:

- Santa Clarita Group: political chair, endorsement team leader/member, conservation committee member
- Represented our group on the Angeles Chapter Political Committee since 2016 and on the Chapter ExCom since 2018.
- Ran for Congress to replace the anti-environmental incumbent Buck McKeon in 1996. In that race and in my subsequent campaigns for the Santa Clarita City Council, I have been honored to receive the Sierra Club endorsement.
- 2002, appointed to serve as a city planning commissioner. During my 12 years in office, making environmental protection my highest priority.
- 2008, helped to pass our city's open-space preservation district.
- Partnered with a neighborhood alliance to stop development in an area that is now preserved as open space.
- Rallied PTA members to oppose the Cemex mining project.



Steve Dunwoody

All across the country, we can see the effects of climate change play out, from the wildfires in California to the recent floods resulting from Hurricane Ida. Not to mention that even now, there is indigenous resistance to increased pipelines in the Midwest. All of this means that we cannot afford to let our “foot off the gas” in pressing ahead for equity-centered climate change policies. We cannot forget the importance of centering equity and ensuring that no community, particularly the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, is left behind but instead at the forefront of the fight for these changes.

In 2017, following the inauguration of Donald Trump, California took on the mantle of being the “home of the resistance.” Resistance to the policies of Donald Trump, especially climate change, became part of the bedrock of California. Now that President Biden is in office, it is essential that we do not become lax or slow down the fight against climate change, while mistakenly thinking that things will necessarily become better.

As a veteran of the misbegotten war in Iraq, I saw firsthand the results of this country’s insatiable appetite for fossil fuels on both the land and the people of Iraq - not to mention the toll of the loss of life and waste of resources of our own. Having seen the geopolitical implications of these policies, I think it gives me a unique perspective. It inspired me to join the campaign of then U.S. Senator Barack Obama after he came to my hometown of Detroit to declare that we must “end to the tyranny of oil.” I carried these words with me years later as I did advocacy work around campaigns (of which the Sierra Club was a part) to protect public lands such as the San Gabriel Mountains and the Mojave Desert from drilling. And closer to home in helping to advocate for the people living around the Inglewood oilfield here in Los Angeles, whose community’s health has been impacted by activities there.

I’m running for the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter to ensure that we keep up the fight and resistance here in Los Angeles. We have the opportunity to be leaders in this fight. To be an example to the state and the nation in how to keep up the resistance. As we used to say in the military, it’s time to get “suited and booted”! As a member of the Executive Committee, this is the commitment I will bring to the table. Thank you for your support!



Liliana Griego

Growing up in Los Angeles, I never knew about the mountains that served as the backdrop to my city until I became involved with the Sierra Club. My journey began after I completed my Master's Degree in Marine Conservation. I felt overwhelmed by devastating environmental issues and unsure of how I could play a part in resolving them. I found my solution as a participant in the Nature for All Leadership Academy, a program that the Sierra Club helps lean and support. The program focused on civic engagement and community advocacy for the San Gabriel Mountains. I became passionate about using my background in science to advocate for environmental awareness and change in Southern California.

By receiving scholarships, grants, and support from the Sierra Club, I joined a thriving environmental community. I completed the Sierra Club's Wilderness Travel Course and Wildlands Campaign Training, joined the Forest Committee and Equity Advisory Group, and served my first term as an At-large Executive Committee Member. As the Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement for Friends of the Los Angeles River, I conduct outdoor education programs, work with diverse communities, and lead campaigns to establish equitable access to open space and secure financial resources for urban parks and waterways.

As a woman of color, I am dedicated to creating an inclusive and diverse community within the Sierra Club. Serving as a member of the ExCom and Equity Advisory Committee, I have recruited new, young, and diverse volunteers and worked with other dedicated members of the Chapter to create tangible steps to create a more inclusive Chapter and Club. If given the opportunity to continue serving on the ExCom, I will continue my dedication to this work and identify more opportunities for growth.

To achieve our goals as a leading environmental organization, we need to collaborate with other important issue-based organizations. I will advocate for an integrative approach to address regional social and economic challenges, such as homelessness, education, affordable housing, transportation, and the daily threats of our climate crisis. Together, we can use our experiences, talents, and relationships to implement new initiatives and create a more promising Angeles Chapter. If you are striving for a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive community, then I ask for your vote so that we can achieve these aspirations together.



Dyana Peña

Having grown up with a deep appreciation for our natural environment and in an area of Los Angeles with prevalent environmental issues, I am committed to improving the quality of life in what I see as a wonderful community that I get to call home. I am fortunate enough to have been able to make it my life's mission to help other people find their place in the environmental movement, whether through my career as an environmental educator or through

my work with the Angeles Chapter. I began my involvement with the Sierra Club in college by attending climate rallies. I became a member and was officially involved in 2017 by joining the Orange County Political Committee. Since then, I have joined the Equity Advisory Group for the Angeles Chapter, and have filled a vacancy on the Executive Committee. I am also on the Sierra Club's Equity Learning Strategy design team. I am currently vice-chair of the Executive Committee. I feel lucky to serve in such an important leadership role for this Chapter and have tremendous respect for the responsibility I have as a member and now a candidate for this Committee. I'm proud of the leadership that the Sierra Club continues to show and commit to bringing excitement and energy to the Chapter.

Approaching solutions to our many environmental challenges through restorative justice and collective liberation is imperative to me as I believe the Sierra Club has space for anyone looking to get involved in this movement. I firmly believe that we cannot tackle this impending climate crisis without every single person becoming involved in our revolutionary movement towards a sustainable future. I am committed to ensuring that our Chapter is prepared to receive and welcome all to our movement. Recently, my proudest experience has been nominating Godinez High School's Environmental Club for a special award at our Political Leadership Awards Ceremony. I hope to be able to represent the Chapter in an equitable way and thank anyone in advance for their vote of confidence in me to continue to serve on the Committee. Thank you for your consideration!



Aura Vasquez

Environmental justice has been my passion since I watched a science show about global warming at 11 years old. I experienced environmental injustice firsthand as a youth in Colombia. I grew up with asthma, my mother constantly cleaned black ash, and we experienced constant rotting odors, all from the production of sugarcane.

I bring that passion, the diversity of my background as an immigrant and woman of color as well as my organizational ability to the Sierra Club of Los Angeles. If elected to the Executive Committee, I would focus on the action-oriented aspects of the Sierra Club mission: to educate and protect our environment using all lawful means.

My professional experience includes nearly two decades of policy at every level. I currently sit on the boards of the League of Conservation Voters, Heart of LA Democratic Club, and Stonewall Democratic Club and am on the Executive Board as a delegate to the California Democratic Party's 50th District. I am also the chair of the Sierra Club Los Angeles Climate Action Committee.

As the youngest-ever commissioner appointed to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, I was also the first immigrant to ever hold the position. My tenure was a breakthrough in transparency. I began the first "Office Hours," opening my door to ratepayers. I was also instrumental in retiring three coastal gas plants, putting Los Angeles on a path to 100% renewable energy.

As a community organizer, I have rallied thousands in support of environmental justice. Our community helped pass the ban of single-use plastic bags, established the Feed-in Tariff, the country's largest solar program, helped secure a coal-free Los Angeles by 2025, and supported the Clean Power Plan. I also advocated for SB100, requiring utilities to produce half their electricity with clean energy by 2030 and reduce California's greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below 1990 levels.

I regularly gather coalitions of citizens through my personal and professional social media channels to experience and protect California's natural wonders. I brought thousands of people to the streets for the 2013 "Forward on Climate" rally in Los Angeles and the 2017 "People's Climate March" in Washington, D.C.

As a member of the Executive Committee, I would continue my tireless advocacy and action in pursuit of the Sierra Club mission, encourage Angelinos to explore, enjoy and protect the planet, and bring strong, equitable, and compassionate leadership.



Brian Biery

My first awareness of environmental degradation occurred on camping trips as a Boy Scout in the '70s. As we hiked through the Angeles National Forest and the High Sierra we noticed the deep trail scars that were cut by thousands of previous hikers, the litter deposited near the edge of otherwise pristine lakes, the charred fire remains at alpine campsites and numerous other signs of human impact damage.

Today, with accelerating climate change, diminishing natural resources, overuse of public lands, etc. there is no more urgent time for the Sierra Club to organize and take action to protect our planet. However, the only way to successfully combat these enormous threats is to build a movement that includes everyone in the process. Due to its significant role in environmental activism in our country, the SC must be a leader in practices around inclusion and diversity.

My experience in guiding and managing nonprofit organizations, (especially those connected to nature, education, and youth development), would be an asset to the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee. My decades of experience in working with grassroots groups in community organizing, leadership development, outreach/engagement, and other nonprofit best practices, provide me with the experience and skills to be an effective member of the EC team. And as a diversity, equity, and inclusion practitioner I understand what it takes to create an inclusive environment so that all members of our community feel welcome to participate in a Sierra Club project, action, or event.

The current environmental and social challenges before us require a new way of thinking about how we solve problems. In order to effectively collaborate we must recognize that everyone is valuable and, as a result, then create a place for all members of the community at the table to contribute. I respectfully ask for your vote for a seat on the AC Executive Committee in order to begin this important work. Thank you for your consideration!



John Monsen

I've lived almost all of my life in the Angeles Chapter from Koreatown to OC, and the San Gabriel and San Fernando Valleys. I know the Chapter, its people, and its programs well. I have great respect for outings since they, along with my lifelong political activism, inspired my becoming a Sierra Club activist.

If you elect me I would bring to the ExCom two decades of experience making change happen along with an extensive record of very effective service on 12 Sierra Club committees and a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Highlights of Making Change Happen

- Led a Political Committee initiative last year that replaced three conservative water board members with progressive people of color;
- Leader, the establishment of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument;
- Led the campaign that inspired River and Mountains Conservancy to commit to improving poor recreational conditions predominantly Latino families encounter along the East Fork, San Gabriel River.
- Leader in a campaign that stopped massive pump-storage power station near an Orange County Wilderness.
- An early leader in developing diverse EJ, conservation organization Nature for All.
- Leading Water Committee campaign to stop desert-damaging water project.

I've been a leader of 18 successful conservation and equity campaigns. I served on Sierra Club National Field Staff in Los Angeles for seven years. I am a recipient of the Chapter's Extraordinary Achievement Award, served on the board of the Angeles Chapter Foundation, and have grant and fund-raising experience. I was Conservation Chair of the Hundred Peaks group, leading many hikes into the San Gabriel Mountains.

I was one of the founders of the Chapter Forest Committee where I'm its current Co-Chair. I also serve on the Chapter Wildlands Urban Wildfire, Conservation, Political and Water Committees plus three that are statewide. I have been chair of the statewide California Conservation Committee. I'm creative and collaborative and I enjoy helping other people succeed.

2022 Priorities

- Promote equity and inclusion.
- Restore Outings Programs safely without onerous requirements.
- Stopping inappropriate development, especially in high fire risk zones.
- Campaign to grow and diversify membership.
- Better connect underserved communities with nature.
- Stop habitat loss
- Influence post-Brune Club direction, retaining Club grassroots orientation
- Climate Crisis

Education

- BA, Comparative Culture, UC Irvine
- MA, Social Sciences UCI. Field work, Ticul, Yucatan
- Founding editor, UCI student newspaper

Endorsers

Susana Reyes, Sharon Koch, Martha Camacho-Rodriguez, Liliana Griego, David Haake, Juana Torres, Frank Gruber.

Anneliese Pineda Klein



I am running for the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee of the Sierra Club because I am committed to protecting the environment and creating a more inclusive and diverse membership. My history in environmental justice and my work as a Sierra Club leader are proof of my impact and dedication. As a Latina, I also bring a diverse perspective to the Committee.

As Vice-Chair of the Chapter's Communications Committee, I co-lead a large team across multiple communication platforms (social media, web, and email). During my time, I have created teams and established consistent processes from scratch, dramatically increasing our content creation and reach, and broadening our target audiences. I understand the value of bilingual content and am working to increase public-facing content that is offered in Spanish to better represent and engage with local communities that are largely Latinx.

In my day job, I am a User Experience Designer working on a digital communications platform. My job entails problem-solving and digging deep to the root of the problem to understand how to develop a sustainable solution. I believe in understanding the "why" in problems that plague people, groups, and organizations. As a product designer, it is my job to be passionate about improving accessibility and advocating for the unseen individual. It is this mentality, advocacy, and set of skills that I bring to my environmental justice work as well.

I am a long-time sustainability and environmental justice advocate and supporter. From my early days volunteering with Sustainable South Bronx (NYC), City Harvest (NYC), and Catalytic Communities (Rio de Janeiro), I have always believed in taking action and valued being a part of an organization that positively impacts underserved communities. I have experience advocating for communities that are diverse in terms of socio-economics, language, race, and ethnicity - communities that are critical to advancing the mission of the Sierra Club.

I also have governance experience, having recently completed a two-year term on the board of the Wellesley Club of Los Angeles where I served as Secretary.

As a Member-at-Large of ExCom, I would actively work to fulfill the mission of the Sierra Club, diversify our membership, engage with overlooked communities, increase the accessibility of information to Sierra Club members and non-members and serve on committees such as the Equity Advisory Group. I am ready to dedicate myself to the Executive Committee of the Angeles Chapter and hope I can count on your vote.



Elizabeth Neat

I completed the unexpired term of a retiring member, and once again, I am a candidate for an at-large seat on the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee. I got involved with the Sierra Club through Inspiring Connections Outdoors more than 25 years ago. Since I joined ICO, I have served three 2-year terms as Chair of the group and led over 500 outings—both day hikes and overnight trips—for young people aged five to 18. Although ICO is my initial connection to the Club and is still my passion, I think that an at-large member of

the Executive Committee should work to stay informed about the priorities and concerns of all of the Chapter's groups and sections. I am prepared to make myself accessible to all groups, sections, and members; I will represent their views even if different from my own. Since being appointed to ExCom, I have taken on the responsibility of chairing the Chapter fund-raising committee.

An ExCom member should assist the Chapter to meet the needs of its constituencies and to forge connections with other groups working on environmental issues. My experience in developing partnerships among a broad range of local environmental groups, will assist in these endeavors.

In looking at the Club's priority of equity, inclusion and justice within the organization, I believe there are ways Sierra Club could partner with former ICO students and their parents around environmental issues to address this priority and the agencies with which ICO works could be approached to broaden our reach.

Three important challenges which the Chapter and the Sierra Club as a whole are facing are as follows: serving a diverse constituency--both Club members and the community at large—in a way that is relevant at the local level, while respecting and advancing the national vision; distributing the work and the leadership of the organization in a way that honors the grassroots, volunteer nature of the Club; and promoting inclusion, that is, engaging current members and recruiting new ones. These are all difficult issues, with no easy solutions.

My suggestions include the following: conducting outreach to identify local concerns and environmental hazards; considering ways to break down responsibilities or tasks in order to make them more manageable and to engage more people; reaching out to various community groups and organizations; and promoting specific projects, such as Coastal Clean-up Day, in order to attract new participants.



Bettie Pearson

I am an At Large member of the Executive Committee of the Angeles Chapter. My election to this body developed largely from serving as an alternate for a few years with the Crescenta Valley (“CV”) Group. I was honored to be asked to become a candidate and very pleased to be elected to the Chapter’s leadership team.

I am a member of the management committee of the CV group. Primarily, I bring to our CV group news and information about conservation plans and projects happening throughout the chapter and in particular in our locality. For the past seven years, I have published our monthly online newsletter, The Crescenta Valley View, distributed to our regional group members through our “listserve” and inserted on our group’s webpage of the chapter’s website.

I have been an O-rated leader for six years and an O2-rated leader for four years. Prior to the pandemic I led and co-led dozens of day hikes and a handful of backpack trips. I enjoy the outdoors and so appreciated and really enjoyed the challenges and training delivered through WTC, and I am a 2018 graduate.

I have participated in various activities with my regional group and with the chapter. Where conservation is concerned, I don’t hesitate to table at events where information about the Club is being disseminated and where I can promote the group, the chapter, the club.

My community involvement includes serving as an official volunteer for Glendale’s Parks and Recreation Department – under the auspices of the Trails and Open Space Foundation. I work with others from the CV group and city volunteers planting and tending to trees in the Verdugo Mountains Experimental Forest. As a member of the trail maintenance crew, I trim foliage, clear and rebuild sections of trails in Glendale’s city parks.

I value the good works of our Club, and I invite others to join so that we can all have a voice in retaining our open spaces, have clean drinking water, and fill our lungs with clean, pollution-free air.

I support our Club’s environmental focus, embodied in the motto: explore, enjoy, and protect the planet. This is also my “environmental focus,” combined with retaining and reusing, concepts I practice, and have for many years.

I believe At Large members play a key role on the executive body, and if elected, this will be my third term.



Coby King

O-U-T-I-N-G-S!

(and transit)

I've been an environmentalist all my life and an active Sierra Club member for a quarter-century!

If elected, I will work hard to preserve our open spaces and move forward climate-friendly policies through activism, coalition-building, and OUTINGS!

For 23 years, since I first climbed Mount Islip, I've been devoted to climbing peaks, especially on the Hundred Peaks Section and Lower Peaks Committee lists.

And over those years, I've become deeply convinced that maintaining a robust and well-managed Outings program is critical to achieving many of the Club's missions to preserve and protect the environment. For many, seeing our local mountains (and being surprised and amazed at the diversity and beauty of the landscapes) is the first step to preserving these special places from the ravages of development and climate change.

Putting those beliefs into action, I was elected to the Hundred Peaks Section Management Committee in 2013. I was immediately elected vice-chair of MComm and have served as either chair or vice-chair ever since. I'm coming off MComm this year as the only four-time chair in HPS's history. During that time, I've helped move HPS in a very positive direction. Our bi-monthly newsletter and our election process are now electronic, reducing our climate footprint. I've helped HPS modernize and work to attract younger people to our outings.

I've also served as HPS's Facebook administrator and as webmaster and executive committee member for the Lower Peaks Committee. I want to renew efforts to expand our Outings leadership and incorporate justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into our programs.

ALSO, I believe deeply in the environmental benefits of TRANSIT. Over the past 10 years, I've become a leader in bringing more transit to the San Fernando Valley (where I live) and was a key proponent of 2016's Measure M, which is funding the East San Fernando Light Rail Line (a game-changer for underserved communities), improving the Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit, and providing funding for the Sepulveda line to connect the Valley to the Westside.

I've participated on the chapter's Transportation Committee for many years and will bring my expertise and connections to the Chapter's advocacy.

As a political insider in Los Angeles and Democratic Party politics for decades, I see my experience as an opportunity for the Chapter to have a better seat at the table and more influence on policies.

Thank you for your support.



José Trinidad Castañeda

I'm running for Angeles Chapter ExCom to increase visibility and ensure greater representation of youth, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQ, and all members.

As a young Indigenous climate activist, former Orange County Political Committee Co-Chair, and current city Environmental Commissioner, I know what it takes to make the Sierra Club a better organization to advocate, educate, mobilize, and organize to stop the climate crisis.

I joined the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter Orange County Conservation Committee and Political Committee in 2018, hoping to make a greater impact in implementing Zero Waste policies and elect more environmental candidates to office. I am proud to have been part of an amazing team who did just that. It would be an honor to earn your vote.