

# CRESCENTA VALLEY VIEW

VOLUME VIII, ISSUE III

Sierra Club's Crescenta Valley Group Newsletter

JUNE/JULY 2021

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## Wildfires, the New Normal, Demand Effective and Robust Legislation

By Ileana Wachtel

Wildfires have become a constant in the life of most Californians; they've caused massive destruction to homes, lives, livelihoods and habitat, increased greenhouse gases, and negatively impacted biodiversity. The sweeping pace and colossal severity of the fires California endured in 2020 – [more than 8,200 fires ravaged over 4 million acres](#) – exacerbated by weeks of dry, hot conditions was a stark reminder of how fast climate change is accelerating and putting California at the precipice of a new era of wildfire impact. And 2021 isn't looking much better, given the little rainfall the state has experienced so far. According to a report in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#), "California is barreling toward its driest and most fire-prone months," increasing the number of fires per month. In the month of January, there were [297 wildfires](#), compared to 97 wildfires in January 2020.

[Experts describe](#) this as the "new normal," where historic wildfire buffers such as 12-lane freeways now fail to stop wind-driven wildfires. The 2018 Woolsey fire jumped the 101 freeway, and the 2017 Thomas fire sped past [70 miles of fuel breaks and three major highways](#). The economic toll mirrors the loss of life and habitat devastation these fires cause. [In 2020 the cost was over \\$12.079](#)



*Ileana Wachtel is a member of the Sierra Club Wildland Urban Wildfire Committee, a media strategist and communications expert.*

**Wildfires continued on page 2**

### Los Angeles Chapter Officers – 2021

Chair	Dennis Loya
Vice Chair	Dyanna Pena
Secretary	Jason Islas
Treasurer	Cherry Postic

### Crescenta Valley Group Management Committee

Chair	Fred Dong	Ex Com Rep	Cathy Kissinger
Vice Chair	Jeffrey Wilson	Membership	Silvia Darie
Secretary	Pat Kramer	Outings	Silvia Darie
Treasurer	Jerry Burnham	Conservation	Bettie Pearson
Publicity	Marlene Plummer	Newsletter	Bettie Pearson
Programs	Wayne Fisher	Webmaster	Chuck Gooley
Social Media	Karen Buehler	Social Media	Pat Kramer

*Wildfires, from page 1*

billion, including over \$10 billion in property damage and \$2.079 billion in fire suppression costs. Legislators have yet to pass a law that would prohibit building in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, which numerous scientists and experts have touted as the most effective method to stop more destruction and death, particularly since approximately [95% of fires](#) the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection responds to are caused by humans. Alexandra Syphard, senior research scientist at the Conservation Biological Institute, and other experts told the [Los Angeles Times](#), “to stem the escalating loss of life and property, California must curb development in high fire-hazard zones.”

**State Sen. Henry Stern’s bill, [SB 55](#)**, however, is poised to do just that. It would prevent housing construction (new development) in fire hazard severity zones “unless there is substantial evidence that the local agency has adopted a comprehensive, necessary, and appropriate wildfire prevention and community hardening strategy to mitigate significant risks of loss, injury, or death.”

On April 8, Governor Newsom unveiled [a \\$536 million funding plan](#) focused on prevention measures.

Legislators have put forth several bills that also address prevention tactics, including:

**[SB 45 – Climate Bond – Portantino](#)** would enact the Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2022.

**[SB 63 – Fire Prevention – Stern](#)** would create a fire resiliency corps and give grants to help people harden their homes against wildfires.

**[SB 12 – Planning and Zoning – McGuire](#)** would require a city or county that contains a very high fire risk area to amend the land use element of its general plan.

**[AB 642 – Wildfires — Friedman](#)** would require the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection to identify areas in the state as moderate and high fire hazard severity zones.

The Sierra Club Wildland Urban Wildfire Committee focuses on addressing land use planning and other issues related to the increasing intensity and frequency of wildfires in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). To that end, our committee initiated a resolution adopted by the Sierra Club on August 22, 2020, that “supports policies that prohibit new building in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, consistent with established Sierra Club infill policy, to respond to increasing intensity and frequency of devastating wildfires on lives, habitat, property, infrastructure, and the environment.”

While prevention measures are effective and needed, the dangers of continuing to build in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones are undisputable. If we are going to stymie the destruction, death, and loss of habitat from wildfires, we must stop building in the WUI. And, there is hope: “Since we humans are the source of most fires, we are also the solution to reducing the number of costly and damaging fires,” [according to UMass Amherst researchers](#).

Right now, every day is Earth Day and presents an opportunity to take action and push for bold, transformative legislation that both helps combat wildfires now and plants the seeds for a sustainable future. For all Sierra Club Earth Week actions, [click here](#).

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## Angeles Chapter Book Club 📖 June 6 @ 6:30 pm PT

The Angeles Chapter Book Club has something for everyone. Expand your knowledge on environmental and social justice issues. Or find that next bit of inspiration to keep fighting for the planet, [everyone is welcome!](#) The read? Dorecta Taylor's *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility* uncovers the systemic problems that expose poor communities to environmental hazards.

**Angeles Chapter Annual Awards Banquet  
Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Drive  
May 1, 2022, 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

We will begin with a fabulous reception hosted by our generous entities, followed by a buffet luncheon. For the SILENT AUCTION, please remember to bring cash and/or checkbook! Contact Stephanie Gross (madelinesmother@gmail.com) if you have items to donate for the silent auction. All profits benefit the Angeles Chapter. For reservation information, go to the chapter's website:

[https://angeles.sierraclub.org/about/chapter\\_awards/awards\\_banquet](https://angeles.sierraclub.org/about/chapter_awards/awards_banquet)

Reservations are \$45 per person. Table of eight \$360 Or reserve whatever you need. The tables seat 16.

**Pilot Hiker to Mt. Lukens Follow Club's Protocol**



**Participants in the May 29<sup>th</sup> pilot hike to Mt. Lukens, sponsored by the Hundred Peaks Section (HPS), were Al Shipley, Bettie Pearson, Conny Burleson, Lidia, Mario Mari-Chous, Susan Kang, co-leaders: Larry Pond, Jeff Buchholz, Sharon Moore, and Reddy**

On an overcast, mild Saturday morning, 11 Sierra club members ventured up Mt. Lukens for a pilot outing, led by William Simpson of the HPS. The club requirements of sharing of food, to wear masks at all times (except, of course, while eating or drinking) and to maintain six-foot distance were closely followed. Next, participants will evaluate the hike protocol and report back to Club leaders.



**Rock rose (of the Cistus family) seen along the Crescenta View Trail, 5/29**



## Restoring the Verdugo Experimental Forest



### “Super Volunteers”

Glendale’s Trails and Open Spaces “super volunteers” **Bob (Bobcat) Thompson** (*above*) and **Jerry Burnham** (*right*) replanting trees after the La Tuna Canyon fire.

The La Tuna Canyon fire consumed most of the Experimental Forest in the Verdugo Mountains. On Jan. 6, 2018, a work crew sponsored by the Trails and Open Space Foundation and City of Glendale, replanted the forest with Jeffrey Pines, Canary Island Pines, Elderico Pines, and Coastal Live Oaks. CV members who participated: Bettie Pearson, Jerry Burnham and Robert “Bobcat” Thompson.

## Egypt Treasures of the Pharaohs with Jordan Extension

**November 3-13, 2021 Egypt November 13-17, 2021 Jordan**

Join us for a 10-day, 9-night tour to see the wonders of ancient Egypt with limited special price international airfare. Our tour will be led by an English-speaking Egyptologist. Optional 4-day & 4-night extension to Jordan to see the world-famous Petra, one of the amazing ancient wonders and a UNESCO world heritage site. The optional Jordan trip cost: TBA includes bus, land transportation, hotels/lodges, most meals, admission fees, walks, and internal airfare.

The Egypt trip land costs \$3,699 Non-members of Sierra Club add \$100 to per-person cost Internal Egypt air flights \$700 per person. **Event Organizers:** Fred Dong:

[madelinesdad@earthlink.net](mailto:madelinesdad@earthlink.net), (818) 545-3878; Stephanie Gross: Gross:  
[madelinesmother@gmail.com](mailto:madelinesmother@gmail.com) (818) 545-3878